SENATE DOCKET, NO. 190 FILED ON: 1/11/2023

SENATE . . . . . No. 87

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Adam Gomez

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act providing for coordinated data and assistance to address family homelessness.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
Adam Gomez	*Hampden*

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SENATE . . . . . No. 87

By Mr. Gomez, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 87) of Adam Gomez for legislation to provide for coordinated data and assistance to address family homelessness. Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE SENATE, NO. *110* OF 2021-2022.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court
(2023-2024)

An Act providing for coordinated data and assistance to address family homelessness.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SECTION 1. There shall be an annual comprehensive report on housing instability faced by families in the commonwealth to enable the public to gain an informed understanding of the issue and to efficiently predict and better direct homelessness prevention and housing resources. The report shall be written cooperatively by the executive office of health and human services, the executive office of housing and economic development, the executive office of labor and workforce development and the executive office of education.

The report shall include the following information:

(1) the number of client households that have been identified as homeless and at risk of homelessness by each agency;

(2) the department of housing and community development shall provide the numbers of households receiving emergency assistance also receiving benefits and services from the following programs: (i) the supplemental nutrition assistance program and the transitional aid for families with dependent children program of the department of transitional assistance; (ii) workforce development programs; (iii) programs of the department of children and families; (iv) early intervention services of the department of public health; (v) MassHealth data on income sources for families in shelter and housing instability screening for patients.

(3) To better understand the level of housing stability among HomeBASE participants, the department of housing and community development shall provide the number of households that have received assistance from the HomeBASE program under line item 7004-0108, including, the number of households that were evicted, the number that returned to shelter, the number of households with involvement of the department of children and families and the number with incomes below 150 per cent of the Federal Poverty Level. The department shall coordinate with programs under the executive office of health and human services on matching data sets for the purposes of this report.

(4) The department of early education and care shall provide the number of contracted slots for homeless children and the current utilization, the number of childcare vouchers issued to homelessness households.

(5) All interagency teams or groups that are currently working on issues related to homelessness.

The report shall be filed with the clerks of Senate and House, the chairs of the committees on ways and means, the Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness and the

Learn to Earn Interagency Working group annually on the day assigned for submission of the budget by the governor to the general court under section 7H of chapter 29 of the General Laws.

SECTION 2. The executive office of health and human services, executive office of housing and economic development, executive office of labor and workforce development and executive office of education shall establish a single joint telephone hotline for residents of the commonwealth to receive information and assistance on benefits, eligibility and application processes for all benefit and assistance programs managed by the offices and the connections and relationships between their programs and other programs of the commonwealth.

Each agency of the executive office of health and human services, executive office of housing and economic development, executive office of labor and workforce development and executive office of education shall publicly conspicuously post on their main internet site information on the benefit and assistance programs managed by the agency, including a link or information on how to access a benefits calculator and guide for calculating benefits in relation to incomes. The agencies shall distribute information about the programs, calculator and guide to homelessness service providers in a form appropriate for distribution to their clients. Each state agency of these offices shall provide training for staff and vendors on the benefits calculator in order to help families receiving assistance gain information on the programs to access the programs and optimize their benefits, including avoiding cliff effects due to the income eligibility rules.