

HOUSE No. 1552

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Rita A. Mendes

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 to create an interagency supportive housing finance and strategy board.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Rita A. Mendes</i>	<i>11th Plymouth</i>	<i>1/17/2025</i>
<i>Samantha Montaño</i>	<i>15th Suffolk</i>	<i>5/7/2025</i>

HOUSE No. 1552

By Representative Mendes of Brockton, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1552) of Rita A. Mendes for legislation to create an interagency supportive housing finance and strategy board. Housing.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)**

An Act to create an interagency supportive housing finance and strategy board.

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

1 SECTION 1. (a) Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, there shall
2 be established an interagency supportive housing finance and strategy board (the “Board”) for
3 the purpose of scaling supportive housing options to end and prevent homelessness.

4 (a) The board shall consist of 18 members: the Lieutenant Governor, who shall serve as
5 chair; 7 members appointed by the Governor; 1 from the Community Action Hub with lived
6 experience of chronic or high acuity homelessness; 1 funder or group of funders of supportive
7 housing; 1 healthcare representative; 1 member of the supportive housing pipeline coalition; 1
8 representative of the Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance; 1 representative of the
9 Citizens’ Housing and Planning Association; and 1 representative from the Massachusetts
10 Association for Mental Health; the secretary of the executive office of health and human
11 services, or their designee; the secretary of the executive office of housing and livable
12 communities, or their designee; the secretary of the executive office of veterans services, or their

13 designee; the commissioner of the department of children and families, or their designee; the
14 secretary of the executive office of aging and independence, or their designee; the commissioner
15 of the department of mental health, or their designee; ; the commissioner of the department of
16 transitional assistance, or their designee; the secretary of the executive office of administration
17 and finance, or their designee; the secretary of the executive office of labor and workforce
18 development, or their designee; and the commissioner of the department of correction, or their
19 designee.

20 (b) The board shall: (i) develop strategic and financial plans to guide the
21 Commonwealth’s creation of a pipeline of supportive housing; (ii) identify opportunities to
22 combine resources from the supportive housing pool fund, as established by chapter 121H of the
23 acts of 2024, and state agencies; and (iii) issue joint requests for proposals for supportive housing
24 to address chronic and high need homelessness in Massachusetts.

25 (c) All initial appointments shall be made by September 1, 2025. The chair must convene
26 the first meeting by September 15, 2025. The executive office of housing and livable
27 communities may provide the board with staff and administrative support, subject to
28 appropriation.

29 SECTION 2. (a) Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, there shall
30 be a supportive housing pilot program within the executive office of housing and livable
31 communities. The pilot shall provide a minimum of 2,000 units of supportive housing to
32 households, including individuals, families and young adults who are experiencing homelessness
33 or at risk of homelessness. The executive office of housing and livable communities may use the
34 supportive housing pool fund, established by chapter 150 of the acts of 2024, to implement the

35 initiative through the interagency supportive housing finance and strategy board. The executive
36 office of housing and livable communities shall set aside \$1,000,000 annually in low- and
37 moderate-income housing tax credits for use by the supportive housing pilots initiative.

38 (b) The supportive housing pilots initiative program shall include: (i) a statewide
39 identification and prioritization process of households experiencing chronic homelessness or
40 with complex needs that prevents them from maintaining housing independently and includes
41 length of time homeless and service needs; (ii) regional coordination with local homelessness
42 system Continuums of Care (CoCs) to align and match housing and services, including access
43 options that are geographically equitable; (iii) homelessness system management staffing
44 resources and infrastructure to sufficiently staff access and coordination; (iv) identification,
45 prioritization, and creation of additional supportive housing resources dedicated for use by these
46 households; (v) identification of Medicaid housing benefits and service options that can be
47 leveraged for case management services and housing stability supports services; (vi)
48 development of a statewide process to set aside child care subsidies and supports, behavioral
49 health and other services for households served in the initiative.

50 SECTION 3. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the executive
51 office of health and human services, the executive office of economic development, the
52 executive office of elder affairs, the executive office of veterans' services, the department of
53 housing and livable communities, the department of transitional assistance, the department of
54 developmental services, the department of mental health, the department of children and
55 families, the department of youth services, the department of correction, the department of public
56 health, the Massachusetts rehabilitation commission, the Massachusetts commission for the
57 blind, the Massachusetts commission for the deaf and hard of hearing, the Massachusetts

58 Housing Finance Agency, the Massachusetts housing partnership and the Community Economic
59 Development Assistance Corporation shall develop and execute a memorandum of
60 understanding to be known as the community housing and services memorandum of
61 understanding. The memorandum of understanding shall include an action plan to coordinate the
62 procurement and availability of community-based supportive services, capital subsidies and
63 operating subsidies for new and existing housing available to residents with very low and
64 extremely low-incomes, as those terms are defined by the United States Department of Housing
65 and Urban Development in 24 C.F.R. § 5.603. The action plan shall establish benchmarks to
66 assess financial savings to the commonwealth resulting from the avoidance of
67 institutionalization, shelter or nursing care due to the availability of community-based housing
68 supportive services. The memorandum of understanding shall identify and determine methods
69 and procedures for eliminating barriers and reducing fragmentation for the provision of
70 community-based supportive services and affordable housing. For the purposes of this act,
71 “community-based supportive services” shall include, but not be limited to, resident service
72 coordinators, housing support teams and other models to link very low and extremely low-
73 income tenants with services necessary to maintain their tenancy or direct community-based
74 social services, comprehensive institutional discharge planning services or other services
75 necessary to maintain a successful tenancy; provided, that receipt of services by a tenant with a
76 disability shall not be an eligibility requirement or a requirement of maintaining a tenancy under
77 the action plan.

78 The community housing and services memorandum of understanding shall be filed
79 annually, for a term of no less than 10 years, with the governor, the lieutenant governor, the joint
80 committee on housing, the joint committee on elder affairs, the joint committee on children,

81 families and persons with disabilities and the house and senate committees on ways and means
82 not later than December 31, 202.

83 SECTION 4. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the executive
84 office of health and human services and the executive office of housing and livable communities
85 shall develop a plan for pairing medicaid housing benefits and community-based behavioral
86 health services with supportive housing initiative units. The plan must be submitted to the
87 interagency supportive housing finance and strategy board, established in section 1 of this act,
88 and the clerks of the senate and of the house of representatives by July 1, 2025. Any federal
89 reimbursement for these services during implementation of the initiative must be credited to the
90 supportive housing fool fund.

91 SECTION 4. Section 2 of this act shall take effect on July 1, 2025.