HOUSE DOCKET, NO. 3032 FILED ON: 1/16/2025

HOUSE . . . . . No. 1570

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Chynah Tyler

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 promote access to housing and improve educational outcomes.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
Chynah Tyler	*7th Suffolk*	*1/16/2025*

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HOUSE . . . . . No. 1570

By Representative Tyler of Boston, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1570) of Chynah Tyler that the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities be authorized to establish a pilot program to promote access to housing and improve educational outcomes. Housing.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act to promote access to housing and improve educational outcomes.

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. The General Laws are hereby amended by inserting after chapter XXX the following chapter:-

Chapter XXX. Access to Housing and Improve Educational Outcomes

SECTION 1. Whereas, the number of homeless students attending Massachusetts public schools has increased by 59% in the past 10 years and exceeded 30,000 in school year 2023-2024; and

Whereas, Gateway Cities have experienced the highest increase in student homelessness and account for all or more of the student homelessness increase statewide; and

Whereas, homelessness negatively impacts the educational outcomes for not only the homeless students, but their classmates and the entire community served by the schools; and

Whereas, stable housing is foundational to improved educational outcomes, health outcomes, and economic circumstances of the families; and

Whereas, Boston's Higher Ground, in collaboration with three city agencies and three community-based service providers, has demonstrated an effective collective impact model to address student homelessness in Boston schools and there are effective models of intervention through coordinated effort by public agencies and community-based service providers to the address this growing challenge in Boston and communities throughout the Commonwealth; and

Whereas, coordinating efforts across Massachusetts communities would result in more communities implementing effective programs and improving education and health outcomes for students and their families;

Now, Therefore, notwithstanding any act to the contrary, this act provides that there shall be established within the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities, a pilot program to encourage and facilitate implementation of effective collaborative efforts in communities across the Commonwealth.

SECTION 2. EOHLC shall issue a request for proposals for five communities to participate in a pilot program to achieve "functional zero" in student homelessness within 5-years, and substantially reduce student homelessness within 10 years.

SECTION 3. Selected communities will have access to the following resources for up to five years:

A. The number of MRVPs sufficient to annually house up to 10% of the currently homeless students and their families. The vouchers would be administered by the local housing authority or Metro Housing but committed to the pilot program.

B. $500,000 annually for developing and maintaining the infrastructure to implement the pilot program.

C. Commitment of annual vouchers and resources would be adjusted each year depending on the progress and outcomes of the prior year.

D. Priority would be given to Gateway Cities and communities that demonstrate the highest need based on DESE data on homelessness as well as student educational outcomes.

SECTION 4. Criteria for participation:

A. Support from the Mayor, School Superintendent, and Housing Departments and their commitment to coordinate with each other and with the service providers within the community and implement the pilot program.

B. The community commits to an annual goal of housing currently homeless students and their families.

C. Communities agree to share data and agree to meet regularly and share lessons learned and best practices.

D. To qualify for support the students and their families have to be residents of the participating community starting in 2025 and continuing throughout the five years of the pilot.

.SECTION 5. Programs and activities shall be implemented through contracts with qualified community-based organizations with the demonstrated capacity to serve as backbone to public-private-community collaboratives to implement the program.

SECTION 6. The programs and activities shall include but not be limited to the following: (1) a research component to address issues pertaining to replication of successful strategies identified; (2) a community coordination function to assure that service delivery are coordinated in order to limit any unwanted duplication and/or overlapping; (3) to document and analyze resources and services targeted for the participant population; (4) identification of the services needed to advance the goals of the program; (5) develop and/or join-in with existing initiatives in order to utilize “best practices” in addressing student homelessness and improving health and educational outcomes; (6) an enhanced management information system support procedure to develop a common intake and referral system to increase the use of preventive services, share resource information, avoid duplication and to allow participants to engage in, hands-on applications and learn state-of-the-art computer use; (7) coordinate mini-grants to various community agencies; and (8) develop needed services as required for the success of the program.

SECTION 7. There is hereby established and set up on the books of the commonwealth a separate fund to be known as the Access to Coordinated Housing and Education Fund. There shall be credited to fund an amount sufficient to sustain such an initiative in the immediate fiscal year Commonwealth’s budget, and thereafter for a period of five (5) years.