

HOUSE No. 2261

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Carol A. Doherty

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 ending the criminalization of homelessness.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Carol A. Doherty</i>	<i>3rd Bristol</i>	<i>1/16/2025</i>
<i>James K. Hawkins</i>	<i>2nd Bristol</i>	<i>2/11/2025</i>

HOUSE No. 2261

By Representative Doherty of Taunton, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 2261) of Carol A. Doherty and James K. Hawkins relative to the criminalization of homelessness. Municipalities and Regional Government.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act ending the criminalization of homelessness.

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. Section 21D of Chapter 40 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2020
2 Official Edition, is hereby amended by adding the following paragraph at the end thereof:

3 No city or town shall adopt or enforce any ordinance, by-law, rule, or regulation under
4 this section that imposes a monetary penalty or other sanction on homeless individuals solely for
5 the act of trespassing, sleeping, or camping on public property. For the purposes of this section,
6 'homeless individual' shall mean a person lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime
7 residence. Camping shall mean to sleep in a tent, under a tarp or canopy, in a motor vehicle, or in
8 any other temporary outdoor shelter.