

HOUSE No. 787

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Sean Reid

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 establishing a special commission to investigate and study the feasibility of dedicated senior shelters in Massachusetts.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Sean Reid</i>	<i>11th Essex</i>	<i>1/15/2025</i>

HOUSE No. 787

By Representative Reid of Lynn, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 787) of Sean Reid for an investigation by a special commission (including members of the General Court) relative to dedicated senior shelters in Massachusetts. Elder Affairs.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act establishing a special commission to investigate and study the feasibility of dedicated senior shelters in Massachusetts.

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

1 Chapter 19A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2022 Official Edition, is hereby
2 amended by inserting after section 44 the following section:

3 Section 45.

4 (a) There shall be a special commission established within the executive office of elder
5 affairs for the purpose of investigating and studying the feasibility of establishing dedicated
6 senior-specific shelters in the commonwealth. The commission shall examine the unique needs
7 of homeless seniors, evaluate existing resources, and propose recommendations to address gaps
8 in services and housing for this population.

9 (b) The commission shall examine, without limitation:

10 the prevalence of homelessness and housing insecurity among seniors, including rates
11 and causes of homelessness for individuals over 60 years of age;

12 current shelter resources available to older adults and the unique physical, mental, and
13 social needs of seniors experiencing homelessness;

14 the feasibility of developing senior-specific shelters, including potential locations, sizes,
15 and services offered;

16 funding mechanisms for such shelters, including federal grants, state appropriations,
17 municipal partnerships, private sponsorships, and other potential revenue sources;

18 existing models and best practices in other states or municipalities that provide senior-
19 specific shelter services, focusing on staffing, security, health services, mental health care,
20 nutrition, and community-based programs;

21 the role of government agencies, nonprofit organizations, advocacy groups, healthcare
22 providers, and community leaders in establishing and operating senior-specific shelters; and

23 any legislative or regulatory changes needed to facilitate the creation and operation of
24 such shelters, including zoning requirements, licensing standards, staff training guidelines, data
25 collection, and reporting requirements.

26 (c) The commission shall consist of the following members or their designees, who shall
27 serve without compensation:

28 the secretary of elder affairs, who shall serve as chair;

29 the secretary of health and human services;

30 the secretary of housing and economic development;

31 two members of the senate appointed by the president of the senate, one of whom shall be
32 a member of the joint committee on elder affairs;

33 two members of the house of representatives appointed by the speaker of the house, one
34 of whom shall be a member of the joint committee on elder affairs;

35 the commissioner of public health;

36 the executive director of the Massachusetts Municipal Association or a designee;

37 two representatives from nonprofit organizations specializing in elder affairs and/or
38 homelessness, appointed by the governor;

39 one representative from a statewide shelter providers' coalition; and

40 two members appointed by the governor with demonstrated expertise in senior issues,
41 housing policy, or social services.

42 (d) The commission shall organize as soon as practicable upon the appointment of its
43 members. The commission may request from all state agencies such information and assistance
44 as may be necessary to carry out its duties. The commission may hold public hearings, gather
45 testimony, and travel within the commonwealth to conduct such hearings.

46 (e) The commission shall, on or before December 31, 2026, file a report of its findings
47 and recommendations, including any proposed legislation, with the clerks of the senate and
48 house of representatives, the joint committee on elder affairs, and the house and senate
49 committees on ways and means. The report shall be made publicly available on the official
50 website of the general court.

51 (f) The commission shall dissolve 30 days following the submission of its report.

52 SECTION 2.

53 This act shall take effect upon its passage.