

SENATE No. 143

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Robyn K. Kennedy

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 study the role of resettlement agencies in the successful integration of new arrivals in the Commonwealth.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Robyn K. Kennedy

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

First Worcester

SENATE No. 143

By Ms. Kennedy, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 143) of Robyn K. Kennedy for legislation to study the role of resettlement agencies in the successful integration of new arrivals in the Commonwealth. Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act to study the role of resettlement agencies in the successful integration of new arrivals in the Commonwealth.

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) The executive office of housing and livable communities, in conjunction
2 with the executive office of health and human services and the office for immigrants and
3 refugees, shall conduct a comprehensive study and release a report on the state of immigrant and
4 refugee resettlement infrastructure in the commonwealth. The report shall include
5 recommendations on ways in which the existing refugee resettlement structure can be most
6 effectively leveraged and integrated into the commonwealth's policies towards immigrants and
7 refugees.

8 (b) The report shall analyze, collect data on, and include accompanying recommendations
9 on:

10 (1) the state of the existing reception and placement structure in Massachusetts, including
11 but not limited to:

(i) current efforts to resettle refugees, as designated by the federal Office of Refugee Resettlement, and other newly arrived individuals, including efforts to assist refugees in obtaining adequate housing, healthcare, education, transfer of professional licensure and workforce development training;

(ii) the economic impact of newly arrived individuals in the commonwealth on the labor and employment market and revenue generated through tax collection in the commonwealth;

(iii) any failures or gaps in resources that exist in the current system of services for refugees and recently resettled individuals, including geographic regions that lack support;

(iv) where state funds should be allocated to strengthen current systems or address gaps in service;

(v) the coordination of state agencies, community based organizations and resettlement agencies before, during, and after joint resettlement efforts;

(vi) the relationship between the commonwealth and systems of the federal government, including but not limited to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services and the designated Voluntary Agencies (VOLAGs);

(vii) how the commonwealth can support a strong and coordinated resettlement structure for all newly arrived immigrants by leveraging existing best practices and infrastructure of existing resettlement agencies; and

(viii) the effect on resettlement agencies of federal policies that dismantle the federal resettlement system

(2) the state of the current integration system in place for immigrants and refugees in the commonwealth, including but not limited to:

(i) the current integration pipeline and the systems in place to assist refugees from time of arrival through end of services; and

(ii) public policy and funding structures that the commonwealth should support to ensure the successful long-term integration of refugees into our society and workforce.

(3) the utilization of resettlement agencies in the state emergency assistance and shelter infrastructure, including but not limited to:

(i) the efficacy of integrating resettlement agencies and the services that they provide into existing state emergency assistance programs and structures;

(ii) additional support required from state agencies and partners to execute a successful integration; and

(iii) how to best balance state funding for emergency assistance in tandem with funding for the fulfillment of the federal-state partnership for refugee resettlement.

(c) In order to fulfill the completion of the report, the executive office of housing and livable communities and the executive office of health and human services may procure services, including consulting services, and otherwise involve experts, stakeholders, and members of the public. The commission shall be supported by staff from the office for refugees and immigrants.

(d) Members of both the executive office of housing and livable communities and the executive office of health and human services shall be named to support the fulfillment of this report within 60 days of the effective date of this act. Not later than 1 year after the effective date

53 of this act, the report shall be filed with the clerks of the senate and the house of representatives
54 and the director of the office of refugees and immigrants, together with any draft legislation,
55 regulations or administrative procedure necessary to better serve refugees and immigrants
56 resettling in the commonwealth.