HOUSE DOCKET, NO. 591 FILED ON: 1/18/2011

HOUSE . . . . . No. 385

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Thomas M. Stanley

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 relative to moving to economic opportunity housing..

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
Thomas M. Stanley	*9th Middlesex*
Sean Garballey	*23rd Middlesex*
Kay Khan	*11th Middlesex*

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HOUSE . . . . . No. 385

By Mr. Stanley of Waltham, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 385) of Thomas M. Stanley, Sean Garballey and Kay Khan for legislation to establish a program of rental assistance for certain extremely low-income, working families through mobile and project-based vouchers. Housing.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. *3690* OF 2009-2010.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Eleven

An Act relative to moving to economic opportunity housing..

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. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership shall establish a program of rental assistance for five hundred extremely low-income, working families, consisting of one or more persons, through mobile and project-based vouchers; provided, that assistance shall be paid under a program to be known as the Massachusetts moving to economic opportunity housing program to be administered by the regional nonprofit housing agencies; provided further, that at initial occupancy a household's gross annual income shall not exceed 30 per cent of the area median income as determined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, adjusted for household size; provided further, that an adult member of the household must have a work history and be currently employed or seeking employment; provided further, that eligibility may continue for up

11 to six months if the adult member of the household becomes involuntarily unemployed and
12 meets work search or training participation requirements established by the department; provided
13 further, that the initial voucher value shall be the difference between the approved monthly rent
14 less the amount paid by the household; provided further, that a household shall pay thirty per
15 cent of its gross income toward rent; provided further that a household shall receive assistance
16 through this program until the tenant is paying the full amount of the rent without a subsidy for
17 six months or the household's gross annual income reaches 80 per cent of the area median
18 income, adjusted for household size, or in the case of a project-based voucher attached to a unit
19 subject to different restrictions, the restrictions imposed by such program; provided further, that
20 project-based vouchers may be used to leverage capital funds provided by private foundations
21 and shall be used to increase the affordability of units in any development; provided further, that
22 the initial amount of a household's voucher shall be reduced if the household's income increases;
23 provided further, that if the amount of the voucher is reduced, an amount equal to the reduction
24 shall be placed in an escrow account to be held for the benefit of the household; provided further,
25 that at the expiration of five years from the date of the first rental assistance payment or if the
26 household voluntarily leaves the program prior to the expiration of five years from the date of the
27 first rental assistance payment and the household's program goals have been met, the funds
28 placed in escrow shall be paid to the household; provided further, funds placed in escrow can be
29 used by the household prior to completing the program in efforts to attain their program goals;
30 provided further, that notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the release of
31 the escrowed funds to a household, including interest earned thereon, shall not create any tax
32 liability for the household, and the funds may be counted as the household's contribution toward
33 any match required from an existing individual development account, so-called, or similar

34 program; provided further, that if the household is terminated from the program for cause, the
35 escrowed funds shall revert to the department; provided further, that a household participating in
36 this program shall remain eligible for state and federal assistance programs for which they
37 otherwise qualify; provided further, that each household shall have a stabilization worker, and
38 the department shall use funds provided for this program for stabilization workers who will link
39 households to supports including job training, education, and childcare opportunities available to
40 members of participating households or to facilitate a household's participation in existing
41 programs to the extent such programs are available and may enter into agreements with other
42 public and private agencies for the provision of such services; provided further, that a mobile
43 voucher whose use is or has been discontinued shall be re-assigned or converted to a project-
44 based voucher within 90 days; and provided further, that the department shall pay agencies for
45 the costs of administering the program.