HOUSE No. 1328

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Natalie M. Higgins

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 transform the Commonwealth's emergency response system and create housing strategies to end the homelessness of unaccompanied adults.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
Natalie M. Higgins	4th Worcester	1/18/2023
Lindsay N. Sabadosa	1st Hampshire	1/27/2023
James C. Arena-DeRosa	8th Middlesex	2/8/2023
Simon Cataldo	14th Middlesex	2/15/2023

HOUSE No. 1328

By Representative Higgins of Leominster, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1328) of Natalie M. Higgins and others for legislation to develop housing strategies to end the homelessness of unaccompanied adults. Housing.

The Commonwealth of Alassachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court (2023-2024)

An Act to transform the Commonwealth's emergency response system and create housing strategies to end the homelessness of unaccompanied adults.

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 23B of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the following section:-
- 2 Section xx. As used in this section, the following words shall, unless the context clearly
- 3 requires otherwise, have the following meanings:-
- 4 "Congregate shelter", any sheltering approach of mass dormitory-style bed space in
- 5 which individuals are not each sheltered in an individual or shared bedroom demarcated by walls
- 6 on all sides and a door.
- 7 "Continuum of care", has the same meaning as defined in Section 578.3 of Title 24 of the
- 8 Code of Federal Regulations.
- 9 "Non-congregate shelter", a setting where a person experiencing homelessness is
- sheltered within an individual or shared bedroom with walls on all sides, a door, and preferably a
- 11 bathroom.

"Permanent supportive housing", a model of housing that combines ongoing subsidized housing matched with flexible health, behavioral health, social and other support services.

"Department of Housing and Community Development" or "the department", as defined in Section 1 of Chapter 23B of the Massachusetts General Laws.

- (a) The department of housing and community development working closely with municipalities and the continuums of care shall conduct an objective and predictive study of future shelter and housing demand to determine the type and amount of permanent supportive housing, non-congregate and congregate shelter programmatic models necessary to reduce reliance on shelter and meet housing demand one year following the effective date of this section. This study shall determine housing and shelter capacity in every municipality in the commonwealth using calculations based on the ratio of the number of units to the overall population in order to ensure adequate capacity statewide.
- (b) The department shall develop a plan to prioritize the building of permanent supportive housing and new non-congregate shelter solutions, that will supplement or replace existing congregate shelter programs, with a five-year implementation goal to meet the unmet needs of affordable housing capacity for each municipality in the commonwealth based on the ratio of the number of units to the overall population, in accordance with the findings of the study, in order to ensure adequate permanent supportive housing capacity statewide. The department shall determine benchmark goals for the implementation of said study recommendations within the five-year implementation goal to meet the permanent supportive housing needs for each municipality in the Commonwealth.

(c) The department shall create an inventory of existing congregate shelters, the cost to the commonwealth of these existing congregate shelters and conduct a feasibility study as to the extent these current resources can be converted to non-congregate shelter and/or permanent supportive housing. The department shall submit the plan to the chairs of the joint committee on housing and the continuums of care within one year following the effective date of this section.

(d) The department shall develop and provide a specific plan for unique housing responses specifically targeted to unaccompanied adult persons experiencing homelessness, including, but not limited to, long-term vouchers, shallow subsidy pools, rapid re-housing resources and permanent supportive housing. The department shall develop housing resources across a spectrum of need, but shall prioritize those elderly, disabled, medically complex, and LGBTQ+ persons experiencing homelessness. The department shall review and consider alternative construction models including, but not limited to, modular construction, micro-units, repurposed hotels or other alternatives capable of bringing homeless housing initiatives to an affordable scale necessary to end the homelessness of chronic and medically complex persons experiencing homelessness. The department shall submit a plan for the development of such housing to the chairs of the joint committee on housing and the continuums of care no later than one year following the effective date of this section.