

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 1385**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

*Marjorie C. Decker and Liz Miranda*

*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 providing upstream homelessness prevention assistance to families, youth, and adults.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Marjorie C. Decker</i>	<i>25th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/18/2021</i>
<i>Liz Miranda</i>	<i>5th Suffolk</i>	<i>2/18/2021</i>
<i>Lindsay N. Sabadosa</i>	<i>1st Hampshire</i>	<i>2/18/2021</i>
<i>Michael P. Kushmerek</i>	<i>3rd Worcester</i>	<i>2/24/2021</i>
<i>Kevin G. Honan</i>	<i>17th Suffolk</i>	<i>2/25/2021</i>
<i>David M. Rogers</i>	<i>24th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Christina A. Minicucci</i>	<i>14th Essex</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Natalie M. Higgins</i>	<i>4th Worcester</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>James K. Hawkins</i>	<i>2nd Bristol</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Carlos González</i>	<i>10th Hampden</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Erika Uytterhoeven</i>	<i>27th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Susannah M. Whipps</i>	<i>2nd Franklin</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Christine P. Barber</i>	<i>34th Middlesex</i>	<i>3/2/2021</i>
<i>Joanne M. Comerford</i>	<i>Hampshire, Franklin and Worcester</i>	<i>3/3/2021</i>
<i>Patricia A. Duffy</i>	<i>5th Hampden</i>	<i>3/3/2021</i>
<i>Adam G. Hinds</i>	<i>Berkshire, Hampshire, Franklin and Hampden</i>	<i>3/8/2021</i>
<i>Steven C. Owens</i>	<i>29th Middlesex</i>	<i>3/8/2021</i>

<i>Tram T. Nguyen</i>	<i>18th Essex</i>	<i>3/10/2021</i>
<i>Nick Collins</i>	<i>First Suffolk</i>	<i>3/11/2021</i>
<i>Jon Santiago</i>	<i>9th Suffolk</i>	<i>3/16/2021</i>
<i>Steven Ultrino</i>	<i>33rd Middlesex</i>	<i>3/16/2021</i>
<i>Tricia Farley-Bouvier</i>	<i>3rd Berkshire</i>	<i>3/19/2021</i>
<i>Linda Dean Campbell</i>	<i>15th Essex</i>	<i>3/24/2021</i>
<i>Thomas M. Stanley</i>	<i>9th Middlesex</i>	<i>4/4/2021</i>
<i>Paul J. Donato</i>	<i>35th Middlesex</i>	<i>4/8/2021</i>
<i>Orlando Ramos</i>	<i>9th Hampden</i>	<i>4/10/2021</i>
<i>Carol A. Doherty</i>	<i>3rd Bristol</i>	<i>4/12/2021</i>

**HOUSE . . . . . No. 1385**

By Representatives Decker of Cambridge and Miranda of Boston, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1385) of Marjorie C. Decker, Liz Miranda and others that the Department of Housing and Community Development administer a residential assistance for families in transition homelessness prevention program. Housing.

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court  
(2021-2022)**

An Act providing upstream homelessness prevention assistance to families, youth, and 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 SECTION 1. Chapter 23B of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2018 Official  
2 Edition, is hereby amended by inserting after section 30 the following section:-

3 Section 31. (a) Subject to appropriation, the department of housing and community  
4 development shall administer the residential assistance for families in transition homelessness  
5 prevention program for households whose incomes are at or below 50 per cent of the area  
6 median income and who are at risk of homelessness, eviction, foreclosure or utility shut-off  
7 within the next 12 months. For the purposes of this program, to receive cash benefits or other  
8 services, it is not necessary for a household to be subject to the summary process under chapter  
9 239 or have received a shut-off notice from a utility company. Risk of eviction, foreclosure and  
10 utility shut-off may be determined by certified statements from the landlord, mortgage holder,  
11 utility company, or the applicant household verifying outstanding rent, mortgage or utility costs  
12 and the household’s current inability to pay said fees. The department shall ensure that not less

13 than 50 per cent of the funds be provided to households with incomes not greater than 30 per  
14 cent of area median income. Eligible households shall include, but not be limited to, families  
15 with children under the age of 21, elders, persons with disabilities, and unaccompanied youth.  
16 Services and cash benefits under the program shall be made available to households for the  
17 prevention of the loss of subsidized or unsubsidized housing. Cash benefits for arrearages shall  
18 not exceed the actual liability. Eligible households may receive benefits for short-term rental or  
19 utility payments to offset future costs, and to pay for other expenses that otherwise would leave  
20 the household at risk of homelessness. In administering the program, the department shall  
21 coordinate with the department of transitional assistance, member agencies and offices of the  
22 Massachusetts interagency council on housing and homelessness and the agencies contracted to  
23 administer the residential assistance for families in transition program on behalf of eligible  
24 households served by those agencies and offices so as streamline the application process, provide  
25 additional support services, and better promote upstream homelessness prevention and housing  
26 stability.

27 (b) The department shall annually, on or before December 31, issue a report on the rental  
28 and mortgage arrearage assistance program created by this section. The report shall be submitted  
29 to the House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means; the Joint Committee on Housing; and  
30 the House and Senate Clerks. The report shall include but not be limited to the following  
31 information:

32 (i) the referral source for each household and number of households referred by said  
33 source;

34 (ii) the number of applications requested, the number of applications completed, the  
35 number of applications approved;

36 (iii) the number of applications rejected and the reasons for denial;

37 (iv) the household income and demographic information for each qualifying household  
38 and its members. This information shall be provided by zip code and cumulatively;

39 (v) the monthly rent or mortgage liability for each qualifying household and the amount  
40 of each arrearage payment; and

41 (vi) the housing status of each qualifying household at six, twelve, and twenty-four  
42 months after receipt of services or cash benefits.