

HOUSE No. 1664

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Timothy R. Whelan

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 requiring rent escrow.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Timothy R. Whelan

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

1st Barnstable

HOUSE No. 1664

By Mr. Whelan of Brewster, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1664) of Timothy R. Whelan relative to requiring rent escrow accounts in complaints for eviction. The Judiciary.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 1656 OF 2013-2014.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Eighty-Ninth General Court
(2015-2016)**

An Act requiring rent escrow.

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. Notwithstanding any law or special law to the contrary Chapter 239 General
2 Laws, Section 2 shall be amended by adding the following paragraph at the end thereof:

3 Any tenant of residential property asserting in an answer to a complaint for eviction that
4 the conditions of the premises are reason said tenant should not be evicted or should not pay the
5 rent shall do so by verified answer or counterclaim. The tenant shall deposit with the court at the
6 time said answer or counterclaim containing such allegation is filed with the court the amount of
7 the rent alleged in the complaint or proof that the amount of the rent due has been escrowed in a
8 segregated account in a Massachusetts bank in the name of both the tenant and the landlord or
9 shall file a bond for the amount of the rent. Deposit of the rent with the court shall be waived by
10 the clerk at filing if the tenant files with said answer or counterclaim, an affidavit that includes

11 details regarding notices to the landlord concerning the conditions of the premises, complaints to
12 the local health department, copies of any correspondence to and from the landlord and local
13 health department. If said affidavit fails to provide such detail it shall be rejected by the clerk and
14 the deposit of rent as described above shall be required. If the tenant fails to provide such
15 affidavit or deposit at the time of filing said answer or counterclaim, any part of the answer or
16 counterclaim relating to the conditions of the premises shall be dismissed.