

HOUSE No. 234

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Mary S. Keefe and Patricia A. Duffy

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 protect safety net access for Massachusetts residents.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Mary S. Keefe</i>	<i>15th Worcester</i>	<i>2/17/2021</i>
<i>Patricia A. Duffy</i>	<i>5th Hampden</i>	<i>2/18/2021</i>
<i>Lindsay N. Sabadosa</i>	<i>1st Hampshire</i>	<i>2/18/2021</i>
<i>Christopher Hendricks</i>	<i>11th Bristol</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Susan L. Moran</i>	<i>Plymouth and Barnstable</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Michael P. Kushmerek</i>	<i>3rd Worcester</i>	<i>3/10/2021</i>
<i>James J. O'Day</i>	<i>14th Worcester</i>	<i>3/22/2021</i>
<i>David Henry Argosky LeBoeuf</i>	<i>17th Worcester</i>	<i>3/23/2021</i>
<i>Susannah M. Whipps</i>	<i>2nd Franklin</i>	<i>3/30/2021</i>

HOUSE No. 234

By Representatives Keefe of Worcester and Duffy of Holyoke, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 234) of Mary S. Keefe, Patricia A. Duffy and others for legislation to further regulate the closing of community service offices. Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

An Act to protect safety net access for Massachusetts residents.

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 5 of chapter 18 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2018 Official Edition, is
2 hereby amended by inserting after the fourth paragraph the following paragraph:-

3 At least 120 days before taking steps to not renew a lease for or close a community
4 service office and at least 120 days before soliciting any proposals for a lease for a community
5 service office, the commissioner shall notify the chairs of the committee on children, families,
6 and persons with disabilities, the house and senate committees on way and means, and joint
7 committee for state administration and regulatory oversight of the proposed action, the
8 community service office that would be affected, and the reasons for the proposed action. Within
9 30 days of receipt of said notice, the joint committee for state administration and regulatory
10 oversight shall schedule and hold a public hearing on the department’s plans. At the hearing, the
11 department shall provide testimony and data regarding its plans, including but not limited to a
12 comparison of the current and proposed community service office locations for low-income

13 households in the service area with respect to (a) transportation options, including the cost and
14 frequency of public transit and travel time to and from the current and proposed location; (b)
15 office hours; (c) access for seniors, persons with disabilities, persons who are needed to care for
16 children or other family members; persons who are employed; (d) the availability of staff who
17 speak the languages spoken by persons with limited English proficiency in the service area; (e)
18 in areas where there are advisory boards the minutes showing that the board has been appraised
19 of the intention to close or relocate; (f) surveys from its current recipients of how the proposed
20 closure or relocation would affect them. The surveys shall be done in the recipients' primary or
21 preferred language in order to maximize participation and ensure equity; (g) a report of the
22 community services, and community economic and social relations near the current and
23 proposed community service office; (h) demographic and poverty rate data of the residents of
24 both the current and proposed community service office location; and (i) other matters as
25 requested by said committee. The committee shall provide an opportunity for public testimony
26 regarding the department's plans.