

**SENATE . . . . . No. 938**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

***Harriette L. Chandler***

*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 obtaining relief from abuse and harassment.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>Harriette L. Chandler</i>	<i>First Worcester</i>	
<i>Michael O. Moore</i>	<i>Second Worcester</i>	<i>2/24/2021</i>
<i>Kay Khan</i>	<i>11th Middlesex</i>	<i>2/25/2021</i>

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By Ms. Chandler, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 938) of Harriette L. Chandler, Michael O. Moore and Kay Khan for legislation relative to obtaining relief from abuse and harassment. The Judiciary.

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[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION  
SEE SENATE, NO. 860 OF 2019-2020.]

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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

An Act relative to obtaining relief from abuse and harassment.

*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 231 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2018 Official Edition, is hereby  
2 amended by striking out section 85P and inserting in place thereof the following section:-

3 Section 85P. (a) Except as otherwise specifically provided by law, any person domiciled  
4 in the commonwealth who has reached the age of 18 shall for all purposes, and any other person  
5 who has reached the age of 18 shall with respect to any transaction governed by the law of the  
6 commonwealth, be deemed of full legal capacity unless legally incapacitated for some reason  
7 other than insufficient age.

8 (b) Notwithstanding subsection (a), a minor 13 years of age or older may appear in a  
9 court of competent jurisdiction without a parent, guardian, next friend, counsel, or guardian ad  
10 litem, for the purpose of requesting or opposing a request for any of the following:

11 (i) an order pursuant to chapter 209A;

12 (ii) an order pursuant to chapter 258E.

13 (c) If a minor at least 13 years of age seeks relief in a matter under subsection (b) and is  
14 not represented by an attorney, the minor shall be informed that the minor has a right to  
15 appointed counsel and the court shall appoint an attorney to represent the minor.

16 Notwithstanding, the court may proceed with an emergency ex parte hearing. Appointment of  
17 counsel shall be made through the Committee for Public Counsel Services.

18 (d) Subsection (b) shall not prevent a parent, guardian, custodian, or other appropriate  
19 adult to file or oppose a request for relief in a matter under subsection (b) on behalf of a minor of  
20 any age. In matters falling under subsection (b) in which a parent, guardian, custodian or other  
21 appropriate adult has sought relief on behalf of a minor plaintiff 13 years of age or older, the  
22 court shall consider the expressed wishes of the minor plaintiff in deciding whether to grant  
23 relief pursuant to subsection (b) and in determining the contents of such an order.