

H. 1242

AN ACT TO PREVENT HOMELESSNESS BY REMOVING BARRIERS TO SUBSIDIZED HOUSING

“[I]ntended and unintended barriers to the state’s existing housing portfolio need to be addressed, including public housing, subsidized private market housing and all other housing. There are a number of ways to respond in lowering those barriers. We must ensure that all housing resources are appropriately utilized and that homeless people have fair access to them.”

**Report of the SPECIAL COMMISSION RELATIVE TO ENDING
HOMELESSNESS IN THE COMMONWEALTH, January 2008**

There are currently more than 3,100 families and 2,900 individuals in homeless shelters across the state. H. 1242 will help those at imminent risk of homelessness avoid emergency shelter altogether and will help those already homeless reduce the amount of time they are forced to spend in shelter. Many of the proposed rules in the bill are already in place in some public and subsidized housing programs; H. 1242 takes proven best practices and expands them statewide. H. 1242 does the following:

- **Establishes a statewide priority in most housing programs for certain persons who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness due to domestic violence, medical emergencies, or non-payment eviction from an unaffordable home.**
- **Creates reasonable standards for housing programs to evaluate applicant’s history, including credit and rental history and criminal background.**
- **Prohibits housing providers from denying admission to victims of domestic violence because of their status.**
- **Requires housing providers to accept electronic fund transfer payments from applicants and tenants to pay for rent or debts owed at no cost to the housing provider.**
- **Allows public and subsidized housing applicants and tenants to designate a third party to receive notices concerning their applications and tenancies.**

*For more information, contact MLRI, 617-357-0700 (Debbie Silva x340 or Amy Copperman x323)
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January, 2010*

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of H. 1242**

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