



THE GENERAL COURT OF MASSACHUSETTS
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053

December 21, 2016

Brian S. Dempsey, Chairman
House Committee on Ways and Means
State House, Room 243
Boston, MA 01233

Chairman Dempsey:

We are writing to you today to respectfully ask that *H.1129, An Act providing a homeless bill of rights*, be favorably reported out of the House Committee on Ways and Means. It would be wonderful to see the Committee affirm that all citizens of the Commonwealth should have equal rights regardless of housing status in time for the holiday season.

This legislation would create a homeless bill of rights to ensure that people in Massachusetts are not mistreated or denied access to services based solely on their housing status. Included in the bill of rights is the right to use and move freely in public spaces, the right not to face discrimination while seeking or maintaining employment, and the right to vote, the right to register to vote and receive documentation necessary to prove identity for voting, and several other common-sense measures.

This bill would simply serve as a statement of legislative intent and would therefore incur no costs to the Commonwealth. The language was modeled after the law that was passed in Rhode Island in 2012, and since then, similar legislation protecting the rights of homeless persons has become law in Connecticut and Illinois.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Representative Smitty Pignatelli, Fourth Berkshire
Representative Kevin Honan, Seventeenth Suffolk
Representative Byron Rushing, Ninth Suffolk
Representative Brian M. Ashe, Second Hampden
Representative Cory Atkins, Fourteenth Middlesex
Representative Ruth Balsler, Twelfth Middlesex
Representative Christine Barber, Thirty-fourth Middlesex
Representative Paul Brodeur, Thirty-second Middlesex
Representative Antonio F.D. Cabral, Thirteenth Bristol
Representative Thomas Calter, Twelfth Plymouth
Representative Gailanne Cariddi, First Berkshire

Representative Gerard Cassidy, Ninth Plymouth
Representative Josh Cutler, Sixth Plymouth
Representative Marjorie Decker, Twenty-fifth Middlesex
Representative Diana DiZoglio, Fourteenth Essex
Representative Daniel Donahue, Sixteenth Worcester
Representative Michelle DuBois, Tenth Plymouth
Representative Carolyn Dykema, Eighth Middlesex
Representative Tricia Farley-Bouvier, Third Berkshire
Representative Michael J. Finn, Sixth Hampden
Representative Carole Fiola, Sixth Bristol
Representative Gloria Fox, Seventh Suffolk
Representative Sean Garballey, Twenty-third Middlesex
Representative Denise C. Garlick, Thirteenth Norfolk
Representative Carmine Gentile, Thirteenth Middlesex
Representative Susan Williams Gifford, Second Plymouth
Representative Kenneth I. Gordon, Twenty-first Middlesex
Representative Danielle Gregoire, Fourth Middlesex
Representative Stephan Hay, Third Worcester
Representative Jonathan Hecht, Twenty-ninth Middlesex
Representative Paul Heroux, Second Bristol
Representative Mary Keefe, Fifteenth Worcester
Representative Kay Khan, Eleventh Middlesex
Representative David P. Linsky, Fifth Middlesex
Representative Adrian C. Madaro, First Suffolk
Representative Elizabeth Malia, Eleventh Suffolk
Representative Paul McMurtry, Eleventh Norfolk
Representative Frank A. Moran, Seventeenth Essex
Representative James O'Day, Fourteenth Worcester
Representative Elizabeth A. Poirier, Fourteenth Bristol
Representative Denise Provost, Twenty-seventh Middlesex
Representative Dave Rogers, Twenty-fourth Middlesex
Representative Jeffrey Roy, Tenth Norfolk
Representative Tom Sannicandro, Seventh Middlesex
Representative Frank Smizik, Fifteenth Norfolk
Representative Thomas Stanley, Ninth Middlesex
Representative Ellen Story, Third Hampshire
Representative Timothy J. Toomey, Jr., Twenty-sixth Middlesex
Representative Jose Tosado, Ninth Hampden
Representative Paul Tucker, Seventh Essex
Representative Steven Ultrino, Thirty-third Middlesex
Representative Aaron Vega, Fifth Hampden
Representative John Velis, Fourth Hampden
Representative RoseLee Vincent, Sixteenth Suffolk
Senator Jamie Eldridge, Middlesex and Worcester
Senator Jennifer Flanagan, Worcester and Middlesex
Senator Linda Dorcena Forry, First Suffolk

Senator Patricia Jehlen, Second Middlesex
Senator Jason Lewis, Fifth Middlesex
Senator Joan Lovely, Second Essex
Senator Barbara L'Italien, Second Essex and Middlesex
Senator Richard J. Ross, Norfolk, Bristol, and Middlesex