



An Act to Provide Identification to Homeless Youth and Families

Senate Bill 1906/House Bill 2737

Sponsored by Senate President Harriette Chandler and Representative Kay Khan

Bill Sponsors and Cosponsors:

Representatives Cory Atkins, Ruth B. Balsler, Michael D. Brady, James M. Cantwell, Marjorie C. Decker, Michelle M. DuBois, Sean Garballey, Paul R. Heroux, Kay Khan, Kenneth I. Gordon, Kevin G. Honan, John J. Lawn, Jr., David Paul Linsky, Elizabeth A. Malia, James J. O'Day, David M. Rogers, Byron Rushing, Chynah Tyler, and Chris Walsh; *Senators* Harriette L. Chandler, Julian Cyr, James B. Eldridge, and Jason M. Lewis.

Bill Status:

Both Senate 1906 and House Bill 2737 have been reported favorably by the Joint Committee on Transportation. S. 1906 is awaiting action by the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, and H.2737 is awaiting action by the House Committee on Ways and Means.

Importance of This Legislation:

Obtaining a state identification card is a critical first step for youth and adults experiencing homelessness to accomplish typical life tasks and access opportunities. ID is required for a broad range of life activities, such as:

- Applying for jobs
- Enrolling in education programs
- Getting a library card
- Picking up a package from the post office
- Opening financial accounts
- Entering certain government buildings
- Accessing services
- Interacting with law enforcement

Unfortunately, there are significant barriers to accessing IDs for people experiencing homelessness, with some service providers estimating that half of their clients lack identification cards.¹

With the implementation of the REAL ID Act across the country, states have recognized the need for an alternative identification card accessible to people experiencing homelessness, especially youth, who may lack the documentation necessary to obtain a REAL ID-compliant card. Thirteen other states currently offer free or reduced fee cards for individuals experiencing homelessness, and a growing number offer clear alternative criteria for individuals experiencing homelessness who cannot demonstrate proof of address.²

It is time for Massachusetts to step up and join those states that are addressing this issues. Senate Bill 1906/House Bill 2737 would:

- Establish a fee waiver process for youth and adults experiencing homelessness

¹ Hussey, H. (2015). Expanding ID Card Access for LGBT Homeless Youth. Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt/reports/2015/10/01/122044/expanding-id-card-access-for-lgbt-homeless-youth/>

² Mirza, S., Soto, S. and Rooney, C. (2016). State ID Card Policies for LGBTQ Youths Experiencing Homelessness. Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt/reports/2016/09/28/144928/state-id-card-policies-for-lgbtq-youths-experiencing-homelessness/>

- Create a process for individuals experiencing homelessness to apply for IDs if they cannot meet the existing criteria, such as alternative proof of Massachusetts residency that does not require a permanent address (looking to documents already accepted by other Massachusetts state agencies)

Please actively support these bills to increase access to identification cards!

Organizational Endorsers

ACT UP/Boston	Justice Resource Institute/YouthHarbors
Allston-Brighton Health Collaborative	LUK, Inc.
Boston Homeless Solidarity Committee	Massachusetts Alliance of HUD Tenants
Bridge Over Troubled Waters	Massachusetts Appleseed Center for Law and Justice
Cambridge and Somerville Housing and Welfare Coalition	Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless
DIAL/SELF Youth & Community Services	Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth
Domus Incorporated	Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance
Father Bill's & Mainspring	MassEquality
First Church Shelter, Cambridge	Poor People's United Fund
Gates of Hope Inc.	Samaritans Steps
Hearts of Hope Inc.	School on Wheels
Hildebrand Family Self-Help Center	Somerville Homeless Coalition
Homeless Empowerment Project	Wayside Youth & Family Support Network
Homeless Prevention Council of Lower Cape Cod	Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness
Homeless Youth Providers Engaging Together	Y2Y Harvard Square
Housing Families Inc.	

For more information, please contact Kelly Turley of the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless at kelly@mahomeless.org or 781-595-7570 x17.



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