



## An Act to Provide Identification to Homeless Youth and Families

Senate Bill 2568 (formerly Senate Bill 1906) and House Bill 2737

Sponsored by Senate President Emerita Harriette Chandler and Representative Kay Khan

### Senate Bill 2568 (formerly Senate Bill 1906) and House Bill 2737 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 Bill 1906 and House Bill 2737 were reported favorably by the Joint Committee on Transportation in December 2017. S.1906 was amended and reported out favorably by the Senate Committee on Ways and Means on June 21, 2018. S.2568 (formerly Senate Bill 1906) unanimously was passed by the Senate on June 28, 2018, 37-0.

S.2568 and H.2737 still are 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.<sup>1</sup>

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.<sup>2</sup>

It is time for Massachusetts to step up and join those states that are addressing this issues. An Act to Provide Identification to Homeless Youth and Families would:

- Establish a fee waiver process for youth and adults 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)

<sup>1</sup> 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/>

<sup>2</sup> 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/>

- Senate Bill 2568 adds in more details about allowing ID applicants who are experiencing homelessness to submit residency documentation from providers of homelessness services and state agencies under the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS).

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

### Organizational Endorsers

ACT UP/Boston
Allston-Brighton Health Collaborative
Boston Homeless Solidarity Committee
Bridge Over Troubled Waters
Cambridge and Somerville Housing and Welfare Coalition
DIAL/SELF Youth & Community Services
Domus Incorporated
Father Bill's & Mainspring
First Church Shelter, Cambridge
Gates of Hope Inc.
Hearts of Hope Inc.
Hildebrand Family Self-Help Center
Homeless Empowerment Project
Homeless Prevention Council of Lower Cape Cod
Homeless Youth Providers Engaging Together
Housing Families Inc.

Justice Resource Institute/YouthHarbors
LUK, Inc.
Massachusetts Alliance of HUD Tenants
Massachusetts Appleseed Center for Law and Justice
Massachusetts Bar Association
Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless
Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth
Massachusetts Housing and Shelter Alliance
MassEquality
Poor People's United Fund
Samaritans Steps
School on Wheels
The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts
Wayside Youth & Family Support Network
Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness
Y2Y Harvard Square

**For more information, please contact Kelly Turley of the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless at [kelly@mahomeless.org](mailto:kelly@mahomeless.org) or 781-595-7570 x17.**



**MASSACHUSETTS  
COALITION  
FOR THE HOMELESS**