



Everyone Needs ID: An Act to Provide Identification to Homeless Youth and Families

Senate Docket 667 and House Docket 1263

Sponsored by Senator Harriette Chandler and Representative Kay Khan

Lead Sponsors: Senator Harriette Chandler and Representative Kay Khan

Senate Cosponsors: Senators Julian Cyr, Jamie Eldridge, Jason Lewis, and Becca Rausch

House Cosponsors: Representatives Ruth Balsler, Mike Connolly, Carolyn Dykema, Tricia Farley-Bouvier, Sean Garballey, Carmine Gentile, Carlos González, James Hawkins, Kevin Honan, David LeBoeuf, Adrian Madaro, David Rogers, Thomas Stanley, José Tosado, and Aaron Vega

Bill History: Both Senate Docket 667 and House Docket 1263 were refiled in January 2019, and are awaiting committee assignments. Last session, the bill (Senate Bill 2568) passed the Senate unanimously, but did not make it out of 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. An Act to Provide Identification to Homeless Youth and Families would:

- Establish a fee waiver process for youth and adults experiencing homelessness seeking standard Mass IDs
- Create a process for individuals experiencing homelessness to apply for standard Mass IDs if they cannot meet the existing criteria by 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)
- Expand upon the Registry of Motor Vehicles' efforts to better serve people experiencing homelessness³

(February 21, 2019; continued on back)

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/>

³ See <https://www.mass.gov/guides/rmv-real-id-info-center#homeless-individuals->

An Act to Provide Identification to Homeless Youth and Families Organizational Endorsers

ACT UP/Boston
Action for Boston Community Development, Inc.
Advocacy Network to End Family Homelessness
AIDS Action/Fenway Health
AIDS Project Worcester
Allston Brighton Health Collaborative
Boston Area Rape Crisis Center
Boston Center for Independent Living
Central West Justice Center
Children's League of Massachusetts
Citizens for Juvenile Justice
Citizens' Housing and Planning Association
Coastline Elderly Services
Community Action Agency of Somerville, Inc.
Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries
DIAL/SELF Youth & Community Services
Disability Policy Consortium
Father Bill's & MainSpring
First Church Shelter
Gates of Hope
Hearts Of Hope INC
Homeless Prevention Council
HomeStart, Inc.

HousingWorks, Inc.
Justice Resource Institute
LUK, Inc.
Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth
Martin Richard Institute for Social Justice
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
Massachusetts Appleseed Center for Law and Justice
Massachusetts Fair Housing Center
Massachusetts Housing & Shelter Alliance
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
MassEquality
National Association of Social Workers- MA Chapter
Park Avenue Congregational Church, UCC
Pax Christi of Beverly
Poor People's United Fund
Roca
Rosie's Place
School on Wheels of Massachusetts
Tapestry Health Systems
The Health Foundation of Central Mass
Wayside Youth & Family Support
Western MA Network to End Homelessness
Y2Y Network

Please actively support passage of the #EveryoneNeedsID Mass ID Access bill!

State Representatives and Senators: If you have not cosponsored the bill yet, please sign on to Senate Docket 667 to increase access for people experiencing homelessness to standard Mass IDs.

For more information, please go to www.mahomeless.org/advocacy or contact Kelly Turley (kelly@mahomeless.org or 781-595-7570 x17) and Molly Schulman (molly@mahomeless.org or 781-595-7570 x20) at the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless.



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