



MASSACHUSETTS COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

Committed to ensuring that everyone has a place to call home

Please Support An Act Providing a Homeless Bill of Rights, House Bill 1129

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Summary

An Act Providing a Homeless Bill of Rights, House Bill 1129, would establish a definition of those experiencing homelessness and protect key rights of all residents, whether or not they are experiencing homelessness. The bill is modeled after landmark legislation passed in 2012 in Rhode Island. Similar legislation was passed in Connecticut and Illinois.

Bill Status

House Bill 1129 was filed on January 14, 2015, and was sent to the Joint Committee on Housing on March 10, 2015. The bill was filed last session (House Bill 3595), and was reported out favorably by the Joint Committee on Housing in March 2014, before being sent to study by the Committee on Health Care Financing in July 2014.

Why is it necessary to create a Homeless Bill of Rights?

The Homeless Bill of Rights would entitle those experiencing homelessness to the same rights as any other resident of Massachusetts. The Bill of Rights seeks to outline those rights so as to prevent discrimination based on housing status. The legislation recognizes the increased prevalence of homelessness in Massachusetts due to widespread economic hardship, the insufficient availability of safe, affordable housing, and a weakened social safety net.

“No person’s rights, privileges, or access to public services may be denied or abridged solely because he or she is experiencing homelessness.”

The rights included in the Homeless Bill of Rights are the right to move freely in public spaces, the right to equal treatment by municipal agencies, freedom from discrimination in employment, the right to emergency medical care, the right to register to vote and to vote, freedom from disclosure of records, and the right to a reasonable expectation of privacy of property.

The bill seeks to have the rights outlined to be treated as a statement of legislative intent, as a guide for state and municipal agencies.

Protect the Rights of All Residents of Massachusetts: Support An Act Providing a Homeless Bill of Rights, House Bill 1129!

For more information, please contact Kelly Turley, Director of Legislative Advocacy, at kelly@mahomeless.org or 781-595-7570 x17 or Gena Frank, Legislative Aide for Representative Pignatelli, at eugenia.frank@mahouse.gov or 617-722-2017.

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Updated 3-23-15