

An Act Codifying the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) H.1428/S.898

WHAT THE BILL WILL DO?

- Codify, or enshrine in statute, the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP)
- Lower the monthly rent liability for voucher holders from 40% to 30% of monthly income
- Mandate that all allocated MRVP money is spent each fiscal year and that any unspent funds will not revert to the general fund, but will rollover into the next fiscal year for MRVP
- Increase the program's monthly administrative fee, better aligning it with the Federal Section-8 Program standards
- Create a centralized voucher management system that collects data on utilization, race, ethnicity, income and other important metrics
- Require DHCD to submit an annual report to the Housing Committee on voucher utilization
- Require inspections of homes rented with MRVP to ensure they are safe and healthy

WHY WE NEED IT NOW?

- MRVP has been in existence for more than 30 years, but has never been codified into law to protect the program and ensure its sustainability
- With the cost of living at a record high, lowering the rent share for voucher holders from 40% to 30% will help to alleviate cost burden & align MRVP with the Section-8 Program
- In FY'22, over \$20 million allocated to MRVP was left unspent, which is not uncommon. This bill would ensure that MRVP funds are maximized and that those most in need of housing support have access to it.
- A voucher management system and annual reports on important metrics would ensure increased **transparency**, **equity** and **accountability**.
- Unlike the Federal Section-8 Program, MRVP does not currently require unit inspections, which could leave many families stuck in substandard living conditions. Regular inspections will help prevent this.