



Why is it important to pass the Everyone Needs ID Bill: An Act to Provide Identification to Youth and Adults Experiencing Homelessness (Bill H.3388, Bill H.3360, Bill S.2251)?

"The Office of Mayor Michelle Wu proudly supports this piece of legislation and respectfully requests that the Legislature does, as well. In Boston, we are working hard to make homelessness rare, brief, and one-time. Currently existing barriers to identification, however, consume scarce resources and staff time for multiple agencies that provide case management services, including City staff and key partners working with our most vulnerable populations. Hindering service connections and delaying housing navigation efforts, such barriers result in prolonged, preventable, and unnecessary durations of homelessness. In contrast, by removing time-consuming and resource-intensive barriers to identification, this bill stands to expedite service connections and to accelerate individuals' housing searches and overall stabilization."
Office of Mayor Michelle Wu – City of Boston

"Before becoming an Independent/Inclusive Catholic Priest, I myself became homeless for almost 8 weeks in Beverly, MA. I must note that at the time, I did have full time employment which was difficult to maintain due to my not getting a good night's rest. Ultimately, I slept in a "Porta-Johnny" until I was able to receive assistance from my employer to reside in a rooming house. I will never forget those days of darkness. I learned the ways of the street. Now, some 20 plus years later, my Parish helps those who are in need of housing. I volunteer at Haven From Hunger and North Shore Community Action Program assisting individuals in obtaining important documents such as birth certificates, MA ID's & Licenses, etc. Due to my blessed events of the past, I am able to understand what it takes to get out of that vicious cycle of being "unknown" in society. Possessing a MA legal ID is the essential foundation that allows individuals the opportunity to be dignified as members of our society."
-Rev. Father Mike Otero-Otero, St. Claire of Assisi – Peabody

"The Mass ID is Breaktime's number one legislative priority because it will have a direct, transformative impact on the young adults experiencing homelessness whom we support. By passing this piece of legislation, the legislature will empower young adults with the opportunity to access jobs and employment programs like Breaktime's along with other services. We urge them to act now."
-Connor Schoen, Co-Founder and Executive Director, Breaktime

"We need this bill because, in a nutshell, being able to prove one's identity is a human right. It is one of the main barriers that stops people from being able to participate in life as a Massachusetts resident, regardless of their desire to contribute to their communities and find independence for themselves and their families. Making it easier to obtain identification is a

simple, cost-effective step that our Commonwealth can take towards realizing equity.” -**Noel Sanders, Senior Community Organizer, Boston Center for Independent Living**

“BHCHP provides primary health care, behavioral health, substance use disorder treatment, and other services to over 11,000 individuals experiencing homelessness each year. Without access to a Mass ID, individuals are unable to access safe, healthy, housing, or the economic stability of employment.” -**Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program**

“Youth and young adults experiencing homelessness want to finish their education, find employment, and access stable housing – all of which need an ID. By reducing barriers to obtaining an ID, we can help youth and young adults move toward self-sufficiency and end their experience of homelessness, forever.” -**Elisabeth Jackson, President and CEO, Bridge Over Troubled Waters**

“Increased/ease of access to ID cards is important for our residents and guests who have experienced homelessness prior to housing with us.” -**Anonymous, Worcester**

“Prisoners' Legal Services of Massachusetts supports the Everyone Needs ID bill because it is essential to the successful re-entry of formerly incarcerated people back into their communities. Many of our former clients struggle to get ID upon release, and this legislation is critical in increasing access to essential services for some of the most vulnerable residents of the Commonwealth.” - **Prisoners' Legal Services of Massachusetts**

“Legitimate, recognized State IDs allow citizens to work, access services and benefits, and more fully participate in the civic life of their communities.” -**John Lane, Boston**

“This bill is crucial to meeting the needs of young people experiencing homelessness.” -**Sana Fadel, Deputy Director, Citizens for Juvenile Justice**

“LWVMA believes that IDs are critical for a wide range of life activities and that persons who have lost their homes are often in situations that make it difficult or impossible to obtain the usual documentation the DMV requires. Our government should facilitate homeless persons obtaining IDs and the loss of revenues will be balanced by improved quality of life and better social integration of those served.” -**Clarice Gordon, Meeting Basic Human Needs Specialist, League of Women Voters of Massachusetts**

“We are endorsing this very important Bill because it is essential to break the bureaucratic barriers felt by homeless residents. This also holds true for returning citizens.” -**Sophia Bishop-Rice, Executive Director, Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries**

“I support this legislation as someone who works with our homeless population daily. An ID breaks down so many barriers for clients. You need an ID to apply for a variety of services and without it, clients are unable to obtain these services. We have worked on creative ways to obtain an ID for this population, but it would make everything much easier for them and caseworkers in this field.” -**Anonymous, Fall River**

“An ID is essential to access to care across several nodes in healthcare.” -**Louis Brady, CEO, Family Health Center of Worcester**

“As a provider of services to youth and young adults struggling to access housing we have seen the negative impacts to young people as they struggle to obtain IDs needed to access services and supports.” -**Phillip Ringwood, Executive Director, Franklin County DIAL SELF Inc.**

“At Program Rise we frequently assist our clients in accessing new copies of their identification, or applying for new identification. For our clients it can be extremely difficult to meet the document requirements in order to complete the process. This difficult process can create road blocks to treatment, housing access, and prescription access. For many of our clients accessing an ID is the first step towards accessing the services they need to break the cycle of chronic homelessness. Program Rise supports our client's right to access identification with as few barriers as possible.” -**Amy Young-Sadler, Harm Reduction Specialist, JRI Health**

“Homelessness is a function of our system, a tragedy in this country that is manufactured and solvable. One important element is removing every barrier that prevents folks experiencing or at risk of homelessness from thriving. IDs are critical to appointments, employment, interactions with public servants, and social-emotional identity. It is something that most of us take for granted, but is powerful in its personal impact. Please, please remove this bureaucratic barrier to thriving. Support our most vulnerable in this most simple way. Thank you!” -**Matthew Aronson, President and Principal Consultant, Matthew Aronson Consulting**

“The Council of Deacons at Park Avenue Congregational Church voted unanimously to show the church's support of and organizational endorsement for “Everyone Needs ID Bill: An Act to Provide Identification to Youth and Adults Experiencing Homelessness” (Bill H.3388, Bill H.3360, Bill S.2251). We recognize 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. And we feel strongly that the barriers to keeping people from accessing a broad range of life activities that require a state identification card should be reduced or removed as soon as possible.” -**Park Avenue Congregational Church**

“This population tends to be invisible. An ID would provide them with societal standing. Also helps them navigate daily life.” -**Fran Froehlich, Director, Poor People's United Fund**

“For individuals facing housing insecurity, the lack of an ID can be a major barrier to accessing services for which they are eligible as well as economic opportunities. By passing this bill, Massachusetts can join the many other states who have taken down this barrier.” -**Jonathan Cohn, Policy Director, Progressive Massachusetts**

“An obstacle many of our students encounter is locating necessary documents such as birth certificates in order to receive valid Ma ID's. This prevents them to find employees, among other things.” -**Schools on Wheels of Massachusetts**

“We often serve people with disabilities that have not been able to get an ID because of not having the funds and this has delayed them in obtaining other benefits. When we are able to we have provided the funds necessary.” -**Anonymous, Fall River**

“Homeless people are people, not ghosts. They must have Mass ID to be recognized as human and to obtain their rights.” -**Jerry Halberstadt, Coordinator, Stop Bullying Coalition**

“The Children's League of Massachusetts stands with the MA Coalition for the Homeless on this bill, particularly because it supports youth experiencing homelessness. Unfortunately, many young adults with lived experience in the foster care system go on to experience homelessness and we care about supporting this population.” -**Sue O'Callaghan, Public Policy Director, The Children's League of Massachusetts**

“Everyone deserves the opportunity to hold Identification. If we are a true, just, and equitable society then we must enable everyone to have this basic right. Not only does it dignify someone in the eyes of the state, but it enables our homeless population to get material that can lead them on the path to a sustainable future. Please consider increasing the access to basic ID for all Massachusetts residents.” -**United South End Settlements**

“United Way of Greater Fall River has been providing funding for Replacement IDs for many years to help folks in our service area access much needed services. The process, while we try to make it as simple as possible, uses up case workers’ time that could be better used serving their clients’ needs. The dollars we spend on this could also be reappropriated to better serve the community if this fee is waived.” -**Kim Smith, Executive Director, United Way of Greater Fall River**

“For an individual to not have a valid ID, clearly many things which usually are not complicated or stressful, become that way. It isn’t safe for someone not to have identification...” -**Melissa Vasquez, South Hadley**

“As a homeless and public benefits advocate, I have witnessed the barriers and difficulties individuals and families experience in accessing safety net benefits such as Emergency Assistance Shelter and MassHealth and nutritional assistance as well as difficulties securing employment and housing. This bill will make it much easier for so many disenfranchised in the Commonwealth!” -**Emily Herzig, Senior Paralegal, Northeast Justice Center**

“The Haven Project works to support 17-24 year olds who are housing unstable. Our team of case managers work to remove barriers for this population so that they can thrive and become self-supporting. Access to identification has always been a barrier for this vulnerable population and this bill aligns with our organizations mission to empower the young people we work with.” -**Tracey Scherrer Friedman, Executive Director, The Haven Project**

“Many individuals returning home are homeless and unemployed. It is hard to get proof of address, employment and resources.” -**Leslie Credle, Founder & Executive Director, Justice 4 Housing**

“Homeless IDs are critical because they are the solution to escaping homelessness. I have seen the effect of this firsthand on some families, and it’s terrifying to think you can lose your home at any moment and then be at risk of losing your ID, too. IDs are often stolen in homeless communities because it’s treated as a luxury, not a necessity, and unfortunately, I have families who’ve fallen victim to this.” -**YWCA Cambridge**

“A state issued ID is the first step to accessing a number of services for people experiencing homelessness in Massachusetts. The \$25 fee is a barrier not only to getting the ID, but to accessing the services meant to address homelessness.” -**On the Rise**

“REACH proudly supports this bill. Homelessness is a factor that prevents survivors of domestic violence from having to move forward and obtain their human right to a life free of abuse. Not having an ID causes unnecessary barriers to essentials such as food and specialized programs that can support their goals and rights as individuals that matter. I respectfully urge the legislature to support the people whose lives depend on this change.

REACH apoya con orgullo este proyecto de ley. La falta de vivienda es un factor que impide que las sobrevivientes de violencia doméstica tengan que seguir adelante y obtener su derecho

humano a una vida libre de abusos. No tener una identificación genera barreras innecesarias para acceder a elementos esenciales como alimentos y programas especializados que puedan respaldar sus objetivos y derechos como personas importantes. Respetuosamente insto a la legislatura a apoyar a las personas cuyas vidas dependen de este cambio.” -Amarely Gutierrez Oliver, Executive Director, REACH Beyond Domestic Violence

For more information on the #EveryoneNeedsID Bill, please contact Kelly Turley, Associate Director, kelly@mahomeless.org, 781-595-7570 x17, or Julia Garvey, Community Organizer/Legislative Advocate, julia.garvey@mahomeless.org, 781-595-7570 x36

