

HOUSE No.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Thomas M. Stanley

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the passage of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to moving to economic opportunity housing.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Thomas M. Stanley

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

9th Middlesex

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Nine

AN ACT RELATIVE TO MOVING TO ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY HOUSING.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, Metropolitan Boston
2 Housing Partnership shall establish a program of rental assistance for five hundred extremely low-
3 income, working families, consisting of one or more persons, through mobile and project-based
4 vouchers; provided, that assistance shall be paid under a program to be known as the Massachusetts
5 moving to economic opportunity housing program to be administered by the regional nonprofit housing
6 agencies; provided further, that at initial occupancy a household's gross annual income shall not exceed
7 30 per cent of the area median income as determined by the United States Department of Housing and
8 Urban Development, adjusted for household size; provided further, that an adult member of the
9 household must have a work history and be currently employed or seeking employment; provided
10 further, that eligibility may continue for up to six months if the adult member of the household becomes
11 involuntarily unemployed and meets work search or training participation requirements established by
12 the department; provided further, that the initial voucher value shall be the difference between the
13 approved monthly rent less the amount paid by the household; provided further, that a household shall
14 pay thirty per cent of its gross income toward rent; provided further that a household shall receive
15 assistance through this program until the tenant is paying the full amount of the rent without a subsidy
16 for six months or the household's gross annual income reaches 80 per cent of the area median income,
17 adjusted for household size, or in the case of a project-based voucher attached to a unit subject to
18 different restrictions, the restrictions imposed by such program; provided further, that project-based
19 vouchers may be used to leverage capital funds provided by private foundations and shall be used to
20 increase the affordability of units in any development; provided further, that the initial amount of a
21 household's voucher shall be reduced if the household's income increases; provided further, that if the
22 amount of the voucher is reduced, an amount equal to the reduction shall be placed in an escrow
23 account to be held for the benefit of the household; provided further, that at the expiration of five years
24 from the date of the first rental assistance payment or if the household voluntarily leaves the program

25 prior to the expiration of five years from the date of the first rental assistance payment and the
26 household's program goals have been met, the funds placed in escrow shall be paid to the household;
27 provided further, funds placed in escrow can be used by the household prior to completing the program
28 in efforts to attain their program goals; provided further, that notwithstanding any general or special
29 law to the contrary, the release of the escrowed funds to a household, including interest earned
30 thereon, shall not create any tax liability for the household, and the funds may be counted as the
31 household's contribution toward any match required from an existing individual development account,
32 so-called, or similar program; provided further, that if the household is terminated from the program for
33 cause, the escrowed funds shall revert to the department; provided further, that a household
34 participating in this program shall remain eligible for state and federal assistance programs for which
35 they otherwise qualify; provided further, that each household shall have a stabilization worker, and the
36 department shall use funds provided for this program for stabilization workers who will link households
37 to supports including job training, education, and childcare opportunities available to members of
38 participating households or to facilitate a household's participation in existing programs to the extent
39 such programs are available and may enter into agreements with other public and private agencies for
40 the provision of such services; provided further, that a mobile voucher whose use is or has been
41 discontinued shall be re-assigned or converted to a project-based voucher within 90 days; and provided
42 further, that the department shall pay agencies for the costs of administering the program.