

By Mr. Cellucci, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 543) of Argeo Paul Cellucci for legislation to provide for emergency protection of certain children. Human Services and Elderly Affairs.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year One Thousand Nine Hundred and Eighty-Eight.

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR EMERGENCY PROTECTION OF CERTAIN CHILDREN.

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. For purposes of this act, the following words
2 shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly
3 shows otherwise:

4 "Applicant", a person who owns a home or place of business
5 and wishes to volunteer his services to a safe house program
6 and utilize such home or place of business as a safe house.

7 "Child", any person under the age of eighteen.

8 "Emergency", a situation involving a child whose welfare is
9 threatened or who is put in fear by an unexpected event, includ-
10 ing, but not limited to, an approach of a stranger, an accident
11 causing injury, sudden illness, assault or being lost.

12 "Safe house", a neighborhood home or business used on a
13 voluntary basis to provide temporary shelter and assistance to a
14 child in distress or in an emergency.

1 SECTION 2. Notwithstanding the provisions of any general or
2 special law to the contrary, there is hereby established a safe house
3 program for the purpose of protecting children in an emergency
4 situation. In any city or town which accepts the provisions of this
5 act under the provisions of section four of chapter four of the
6 General Laws, one or more persons may establish a non-profit
7 organization for the purpose of establishing and coordinating safe
8 houses in such city or town.

9 The organization shall have the name "Safe House of" followed
10 by the name of the city or town in which its place of business is
11 located.

12 Any person who owns a home or business may apply to such
13 organization for qualification as a safe house volunteer. Each such
14 applicant shall agree in writing that such application shall be
15 reviewed by the chief of police for determining whether such
16 applicant is qualified to participate in the safe house program. In
17 addition, such applicant shall obtain from the commissioner of
18 probation a report of such applicant's criminal record, if any, and
19 present the same to the chief of police. After such screening and
20 after approval of said applicant by said chief and said safe house
21 organization, said applicant shall be entitled to affix a decal to
22 his home or business designating the premises as a safe house.
23 Such designation shall remain in effect until the applicant resigns,
24 or relocates or until such designation is revoked by the safe house
25 organization.

1 SECTION 3. A person who volunteers for the safe house
2 program shall not be liable in a civil action for conduct arising
3 from such person's participation in such program except for
4 willful or intentional negligence which results in injury to another.

1 SECTION 4. The commissioner of social services shall
2 promulgate regulations necessary to carry out the provisions of
3 this act. Such regulations shall include, but not be limited to,
4 provisions for training record keeping, reporting, screening of
5 applicants and any other regulation necessary to providing
6 protection of children in emergency situations.