

By Mr. McIntyre of New Bedford, petition of Joseph B. McIntyre for legislation to provide emergency assistance to prevent homelessness. Human Services and Elderly Affairs.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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

AN ACT PROVIDING EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO PREVENT HOMELESSNESS.

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

1 Chapter one hundred seventeen of the General Laws is here-
2 by amended by inserting, after section two A, the following
3 new section:

4 *Section 2B* — The department shall administer a program
5 of emergency assistance to those who are receiving and those
6 who would be eligible for assistance under this chapter in or-
7 der to avoid homelessness or destitution. The department shall
8 promulgate rules and regulations to establish the levels of ben-
9 efits available under the program and to ensure simplicity of
10 administration in the best interests of needy recipients. Such
11 benefit shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

12 a) for the prevention of the loss of housing, the actual lia-
13 bility up to four times the monthly rental or mortgage liabil-
14 ity;

15 b) for the prevention of utility shutoffs or the resumption
16 of utility services, up to four months of the actual service
17 liabilities;

18 c) for the provision of home heating assistance up to four
19 months of the actual fuel liabilities;

20 d) for the prevention of homelessness, temporary shelter as
21 necessary to alleviate homelessness, when such person has no
22 feasible alternative housing available, up to a maximum of

23 sixty days in any twelve month period; storage of furniture
24 for up to thirty days; moving expenses of up to one hundred
25 and fifty dollars; advance rent payments of one month's rent;
26 and security deposit not to exceed one month's rent.

27 The department shall establish procedures, consistent with
28 federal law, to require applicants for the program to also sub-
29 mit an application for federal energy assistance where appro-
30 priate. No benefits for a particular emergency shall be provid-
31 ed to an applicant under this emergency assistance program
32 when available within seven days of application under the fed-
33 eral energy assistance program to meet such particular emer-
34 gency. The department shall make its decision on an applica-
35 tion as soon as necessary to avoid serious harm to the appli-
36 cant but in any even within seven days after the application
37 is made.