

State considers new ID for homeless

By **Jamie Halper** | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT JUNE 28, 2018

Homeless persons may be eligible for free Massachusetts identification cards under a new bill working its way through the Legislature.

The legislation, passed by the Senate on Thursday, would create special standards for the kind of documentation homeless people would need to get IDs and would waive all fees associated with the process. Acceptable identification would include documents from state service providers, but no permanent address would be required.

If approved by the House and the governor, the bill would apply to adults and unaccompanied homeless youth under the age of 24.

One of the greatest challenges facing people who are experiencing homelessness is attempting to get jobs, housing, library cards, and other services without an ID, said Kelly Turley, the associate director of the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless.

“We’ve heard a lot of stories of people who needed help getting an ID, and if they’re not connected to an advocate, this is often an impossible task,” she said. “We know that having a Mass. ID can open a lot of doors for people experiencing homelessness.”

Turley said one key group affected by this legislation is LGBTQ youth, who some studies show are more than twice as likely as their peers to experience homelessness.

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