



## An Act to Provide Identification to Homeless Youth and Families

Senate Bill 1906/House Bill 2737

Sponsored by Senator Harriette Chandler and Representative Kay Khan

**Obtaining a state identification card is a critical first step for youth and adults experiencing homelessness to accomplish typical life tasks and access opportunities.** ID is required for a broad range of life activities, such as:

- Applying for jobs
- Enrolling in education programs
- Getting a library card
- Picking up a package from the post office
- Opening financial accounts
- Entering certain government buildings
- Accessing services
- Interacting with law enforcement

Unfortunately, there are significant barriers to accessing IDs for people experiencing homelessness, with some service providers estimating that half of their clients lack identification cards.<sup>1</sup>

With the implementation of the REAL ID Act across the country, states have recognized 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. Thirteen other states currently offer free or reduced fee cards for individuals experiencing homelessness, and a growing number offer clear alternative criteria for individuals experiencing homelessness who cannot demonstrate proof of address.<sup>2</sup>

It is time for Massachusetts to step up and join those states that are addressing this issues. That is why Senator Chandler and Representative Khan, working with the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless and the Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth, have proposed this important bill. Senate Bill 1906/House Bill 2732 would:

- Establish a fee waiver process for youth and adults experiencing homelessness
- Create a process for individuals experiencing homelessness to apply for IDs if they cannot meet the existing criteria, such as alternative proof of Massachusetts residency that does not require a permanent address (looking to documents already accepted by other Massachusetts state agencies)

### How you can help:

- Ask your State Senator and Representative to actively support the bill
- Reach out to organizations to request that they officially endorse the bill
- Share personal or professional stories of youth, families, and individuals who have had trouble accessing identification. Please reach out to Bryan Barash ([bryan.barash@masenate.gov](mailto:bryan.barash@masenate.gov)), Lisa Rosenfeld ([lisa.rosenfeld@mahouse.gov](mailto:lisa.rosenfeld@mahouse.gov)), or Kelly Turley ([kelly@mahomeless.org](mailto:kelly@mahomeless.org)) with your testimony.



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<sup>1</sup> Hussey, H. (2015). Expanding ID Card Access for LGBT Homeless Youth. Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt/reports/2015/10/01/122044/expanding-id-card-access-for-lgbt-homeless-youth/>

<sup>2</sup> Mirza, S., Soto, S. and Rooney, C. (2016). State ID Card Policies for LGBTQ Youths Experiencing Homelessness. Center for American Progress. <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt/reports/2016/09/28/144928/state-id-card-policies-for-lgbtq-youths-experiencing-homelessness/>