

HOUSE No. 1312

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Harold P. Naughton, Jr.

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 adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to self-sufficiency in state-assisted public housing.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

Harold P. Naughton, Jr.

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

12th Worcester

HOUSE No. 1312

By Mr. Naughton of Clinton, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 1312) of Harold P. Naughton, Jr. for legislation to establish a state-assisted housing program. Housing.

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE HOUSE, NO. 693 OF 2017-2018.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-First General Court
(2019-2020)**

An Act relative to self-sufficiency in state-assisted public 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 Chapter 121B of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the following section:-

2 Section 60. (a) The department shall establish a program for state assisted housing
3 pursuant to this chapter to provide residents increased opportunities to become self-sufficient.

4 The program shall provide applicants for so-called chapter 200 housing a faster means to secure
5 an apartment and become self-sufficient.

6 (b) The department shall promulgate rules, regulations and guidelines for intensive case
7 management for the program to be administered for chapter 200 housing throughout the
8 commonwealth. These regulations shall include but not be limited to: (1) a comprehensive 5-part
9 personal and family assessment including assessment of the families': (i) finances and financial
10 literacy; (ii) health; (iii) education level; (iv) occupational history and readiness; and (v) personal

11 or family challenges and (2) a family development plan developed in cooperation between the
12 resident and a housing authority case manager.

13 (c) Adult public housing residents who agree to participate in the program shall work or
14 attend school 30 hours per week as a condition of continued receipt of housing benefits.
15 Residents who fail to participate shall be subject to lease enforcement including eviction.

16 (d) Adult participants in the program and all adult household members that are not
17 performing 30 weekly hours of school or work, shall perform community service. For each such
18 hour not performed, the adult shall perform one-half hour of community service; provided,
19 however, that participants can combine their weekly school and work hours to count towards this
20 requirement. The department shall promulgate regulations to implement the requirements of
21 this program and shall set forth guidelines for community service that include, but are not limited
22 to: assigning the community service work to be performed that may include exterior work such
23 as picking up trash, raking leaves, cleaning stairwells, light landscape or office work such as
24 filing, photocopying and customer service.

25 (e) Employed residents in the program shall be enrolled in an escrow program which
26 shall place any increased rent, due to their employment, aside for their future use or in an income
27 disregard program established by the department to immediately accelerate debt reduction.

28 (f) All adult residents who fulfill the school or work requirement shall participate in a
29 comprehensive training program designed to gain needed skills to improve their lives and to
30 become a constructive member of the larger community. Training shall include subject matter
31 relating to financial literacy, domestic violence, conflict resolution, parenting and other topics.

32 (g) All school aged children, of residents fulfilling the school or work requirement, shall
33 attend school on a regular basis and not exceed the guidelines for absences set by the local
34 school district for their family to continue to receive public housing benefits.

35 (h) Applicants for the program may submit an application with the department and shall
36 receive a priority for placement. The department shall promulgate and implement regulations to
37 administer this program on a state-wide basis. The regulations shall implement the following
38 requirements:

39 (i) applicants for the program can expect to be offered an apartment by a housing
40 authority quicker than applicants on a standard public housing waiting list; provided, however,
41 that criteria for admission into a state subsidized public housing apartment shall apply and the
42 process for application and review of said application will be the same as currently exists;

43 (ii) all of the rules and regulations governing occupancy of chapter 200 state assisted
44 housing existing as of the effective date of this section shall apply; provided, however, that the
45 resident shall agree to a lease addendum that outlines the requirements of the program; and

46 (iii) participants in the program shall pay the standard rent required of all housing
47 authority residents based on their income. All other costs including security deposit and first and
48 last month's rent that apply to standard applicants shall apply to participants of this program.