



H.192/S.94 would eliminate barriers youth and young adults face to accessing shelter and supportive services

Sponsored by Rep. Khan and Sen. Gomez

More than 3,300 youth across the country are under 18, unaccompanied, and experiencing homelessness. Young people may be experiencing homelessness alone for a number of reasons such as abuse or family conflict over sexual orientation and gender identity. There are existing services that could help, but current law prevents youth under age 18 from consenting to many services without a parent.

This bill would:

➤ Allow unaccompanied minors who are **between ages 15 and 18** and experiencing homelessness or in significant danger of becoming homeless to **consent to shelter and supportive services** without a parent or guardian

- Minors must be able to provide written consent disclosing their age, guardianship status, and living situation
- Minors must understand the rules and requirements of the shelter
- The services must be necessary to ensure the well-being of the unaccompanied minor
- Minors who are parents themselves can also consent for their children

➤ **Protect service providers from criminal or civil liabilities** for simply providing shelter or services

H.192/S.94 would also establish accountability measures, including:

- Requiring the Executive Office of Health and Human Services to **create and maintain a database for service providers** and requiring service providers to **register with the Executive Office of Health and Human Services**
- Requiring service providers to contact parents or guardians **as soon as possible and within 72 hours** unless abuse or neglect is suspected, and to **report any suspected abuse or neglect** to the appropriate agency

Black youth are more than **4x** as likely to experience homelessness as compared to the overall population of youth and young adults

Latinx youth are more than **2.5x** as likely to experience homelessness as compared to the overall population of youth and young adults

24% of all youth and young adults experiencing homelessness identify as LGBTQ+

Massachusetts minors can already consent to:

- *Treatment for substance use disorder; dangerous, contagious diseases; sexually transmitted diseases*
- *Inpatient mental health treatment*
- *Family planning services*
- *Minor parents may consent to their own medical and dental treatment and to medical and dental treatment for their children*

Questions?

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