HOUSING CHOICE

H.4263: AN ACT TO PROMOTE HOUSING CHOICES

SPONSOR: GOVERNOR CHARLIE BAKER

By lowering the super majority threshold required for zoning changes, this bill will empower the simple majority of people in a community to vote "Yes" for housing. The legislation would **eliminate a key barrier to housing production**: the need for a two-thirds vote of Town Meeting or a City Council to approve certain zoning changes for housing and smart growth planning. This bill will make a substantial impact in communities working to encourage housing development and undo policies that prevent housing production and perpetuate segregation.

This bill will help meet the Commonwealth's housing needs by enabling a municipality to pass – **by a simple majority vote** – certain zoning changes that would help to advance housing production and smart growth. The bill would also allow a simple majority vote to approve certain special permits to build affordable housing around public transit or in mixed-use developments.

The proposed statute **would not require** a community to bring any of these certain zoning changes forward. Rather, if a community decides to bring forward these zoning changes, the bill would change the vote necessary to allow them to take these steps if a simple majority of the community approves.

H.4263 would allow **only the following zoning changes** to be approved by a majority vote:

- Allowing **multi-family housing** as-of-right or by special permit in town in smart growth locations such as town centers or near transit centers
- Approving special permits for **affordable housing** around public transit or in mixed-used developments
- Allowing a small **accessory dwelling unit** or "in-law" apartment in the same building or on the same lot as an existing home
- Adopting **smart growth zoning districts** and starter home zoning districts
- Allowing **mixed-use developments** by special permit in town and city centers, commercial districts, and rural village districts
- Reducing **dimensional requirements**, such as minimum lot sizes, to allow homes to be built closer together
- Allowing special permits to enable developments that have **more units** or **fewer parking spaces**
- Providing for **Natural Resource Protection Zoning**, **Open Space Residential Development**, and **transfers of development rights** to allow the clustering of new development while protecting open space or conservation land

RIGHT TO COUNSEL

H.1537: AN ACT ESTABLISHING A RIGHT TO COUNSEL IN CERTAIN EVICTION CASES

SPONSOR: REP. DAVID ROGERS & REP. MICHAEL DAY

&

S.913: AN ACT TO ENSURE RIGHT TO COUNSEL IN EVICTION PROCEEDINGS

SPONSOR: SEN. SAL DIDOMENICO

Over 40,000 households in Massachusetts were served with eviction papers in 2018. Over 92% of these tenants were forced to fight their eviction without help from an attorney and without help when they first received an eviction notice. Help create a right to counsel and housing stabilization services for low-income residents facing eviction in Massachusetts by helping to pass **H.1537** & **S.913**.

Most evictions happen very quickly, and for too many people, an eviction means homelessness. Many tenants do not know how to protect themselves both before court and in court. Legal help and access to the right resources before a court eviction can prevent families from homelessness, prevent illegal or unnecessary evictions, prevent displacement, and create a path to housing stability. Learn more at *www.massrtc.org*.

FY21 STATE BUIDGET

MASSACHUSETTS RENTAL VOUCHER PROGRAM (MRVP)

MRVP is the most effective tool to immediately help people who are homeless or at-risk of homelessness find homes they can afford. Aiding more than 8,600 households, MRVP provides a combination of tenant- and project-based rental vouchers. **$135 million** will provide an estimated 1,000 new vouchers, help preserve affordable housing developments, and make programatic fixes that will make vouchers more usable and reduce length lease up times.

ALTERNATIVE HOUSING VOUCHER PROGRAM (AHVP)

AHVP provides rental assistance to over 500 very low-income households with persons with disabilities. This program provides persons with disabilities choices to live in community-based housing and avoid more costly institutions or homelessness. **$12 million** will help restore the program to support up to 400 additional vouchers.

PUBLIC HOUSING OPERATING SUBSIDY

Years of underfunding have unfortunately left many housing authorities struggling to operate and keep public housing in good repair. **$78 million** will help housing authorities operate and preserve this valuable resource of more than 45,000 state public housing units in Massachusetts, ensuring the elderly and persons with disabilities - three quarters of of all public housing residents - have safe, healthy, and affordable homes.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
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