SENATE DOCKET, NO. 1541 FILED ON: 1/18/2013

SENATE . . . . . No. 601

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Patricia D. Jehlen

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 passage of the accompanying:

Resolve providing for an investigation and study by a special commission relative to the need for accessible homes for the elderly, returning veterans with disabilities, and families that include persons with disabilities.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
Patricia D. Jehlen	*Second Middlesex*
Jason M. Lewis	*31st Middlesex*
Michael F. Rush	*Norfolk and Suffolk*
William N. Brownsberger	*Second Suffolk and Middlesex*
Sal N. DiDomenico	*Middlesex and Suffolk*
Jonathan Hecht	*29th Middlesex*
James B. Eldridge	*Middlesex and Worcester*
James M. Murphy	*4th Norfolk*
Carolyn C. Dykema	*8th Middlesex*
Michael O. Moore	*Second Worcester*
David M. Rogers	*24th Middlesex*
James M. Cantwell	*4th Plymouth*
Jennifer E. Benson	*37th Middlesex*

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By Ms. Jehlen, a petition (accompanied by resolve, Senate, No. 601) of Patricia D. Jehlen, Jason M. Lewis, Michael F. Rush, William N. Brownsberger and other members of the General Court for legislation to provide for an investigation and study by a special commission relative to the need for accessible homes for the elderly, returning veterans with disabilities, and families that include persons with disabilities. Housing.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Resolve providing for an investigation and study by a special commission relative to the need for accessible homes for the elderly, returning veterans with disabilities, and families that include persons with disabilities.

Resolved, that a special commission is hereby established for the purpose of making an investigation and study relative to the need for accessible homes for the elderly, returning veterans with disabilities, and families that include persons with disabilities. This commission shall review and evaluate options that will result in expanded opportunities for elderly persons, disabled veterans and families who have a child or an adult with mobility limitations to have reasonable access to the homes of their families, their friends and their neighbors in the commonwealth through the application of building standards known as Inclusive Home Design, also known as Basic Home Design, or Visitability.

The commission shall review studies that assess the need and the ability to expand such basic accessibility features in homes to ensure there will be growing opportunities for people with mobility limitations to have relationships of quality with their families and friends, to maximize their ability to be fully integrated into the communities in which they live, and by fostering their independence, to help them find purpose and the ability to contribute to community needs in a meaningful way. The commission shall consider the extent to which accomplishing this requires an investment in building a housing supply that is responsive not only to people's present needs, but also their needs as they age and the needs of future generations.

In this light, the commission shall conduct its review and evaluate the need for increasing the number of visitable homes in the commonwealth (a) by identifying studies with demographic analyses that consider the proportion of present and future households having a member with a mobility limitation, (b) by examining existing housing, and the design and rate of new housing being built in the commonwealth now and in the future that would allow a person with a mobility limitation to visit, or otherwise be accommodated temporarily, or over a longer period of time,

24 (c) by considering the total number of family members who would likely occupy a single
25 housing unit over its functionally useful life, and the likelihood that during this time, someone
26 with a mobility limitation will live there and would be better accommodated if the home has
27 features related to Inclusive Home Design, and (d) by reviewing other studies and conducting
28 such other analyses as the commission in its discretion believes are relevant to its determination
29 of the need to expand the number of visitable homes in the commonwealth.

30 The commission shall examine strategies to increase public awareness of (a) the need for
31 visitable homes, (b) the options that would be effective in expanding the number of such homes
32 that are available to meet this need in communities across the commonwealth, and (c) the costs
33 and benefits of a successful program that accomplishes these ends.

34 The commission shall review the policies that underlay existing publicly financed and
35 funded housing development programs in state government and in local jurisdictions in the
36 commonwealth and determine the extent to which there are policies that have been adopted or
37 are under consideration involving Inclusive Home Design as a minimum accessibility standard,
38 and consider the reasonable options for extending the coverage of such policies to all new
39 housing produced in the commonwealth.

40 The commission shall consider such changes in public policy, regulation and legislation
41 that are necessary to meet the need for visitable homes in the commonwealth by the year 2040,
42 or such other year as the commission may determine to be more appropriate during its review. It
43 shall formulate its recommendations taking into account the best practices and experiences in
44 other states and jurisdictions, including a comparison of the effectiveness of incentives versus
45 adoption of building code standards that are central to Inclusive Home Design.

46 The Special commission shall consist of 3 members of the senate, 1 of whom shall be
47 appointed co-chair of the commission; 3 members of the house of representatives, 1 of whom
48 shall be appointed co-chair of the commission; the Secretary of the Executive Office of Elder
49 Affairs, or a designee; the Secretary of the Department of Veterans' Services, or a designee; the
50 Director of the Office on Disability, or a designee; the Secretary of Housing and Economic
51 Development, or a designee; the commissioner of the Department of Public Safety, or a
52 designee; the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency, or a designee;
53 the Executive Director of the Disability Law Center of Massachusetts, or a designee; the
54 Executive Director of the Boston Center for Independent Living, or a designee; the state director
55 of AARP Massachusetts, or a designee; the President of LeadingAge Massachusetts, or a
56 designee; the Executive Director of Citizens' Housing and Planning Association, or a designee;
57 and three individuals of whom one is an architect with considerable experience in accessibility
58 issues related to Inclusive Home Design, and two of whom represent home builders in
59 Massachusetts of which one is a nonprofit home builder.

60 All appointments shall be made not later than 60 days after the effective date of this
61 resolve. The chairpersons shall meet with the commission not later than 90 days after the
62 effective date of this resolve, and shall meet not less than bi-monthly thereafter.

63 The Special commission shall be empowered to hold regular public meetings, fact-
64 finding hearings and other public forums as it considers necessary. Members shall not receive
65 compensation for their services but may receive reimbursement for the reasonable expenses
66 incurred in carrying out their responsibilities as members of the commission

67 The commission shall issue its final report and recommendations within 180 days after
68 first convening. The commission shall report on its recommendations, including
69 recommendations for legislation, if any, to the senate president, the speaker of the house, and the
70 governor, and shall file the same with the clerks of the senate and the house of representatives,
71 who shall forward the same to the all commission members.