



## Legislation Summary:

### An Act relative to housing production

Initial bill number: [H673/S723](#) (Bill numbers will change as legislation proceeds.)

Sponsors: Rep. Kevin G. Honan , Sen. Linda Dorcea Forry

The major purpose of this bill is to encourage more units of housing to be built that will be affordable to more of our population and alleviate the extreme shortage of housing for low and moderate income families. It is very difficult, if not impossible, to find housing for the thousands of currently homeless individuals and families unless more units are built, especially in parts of the state where there are jobs available. This means increasing density and reducing barriers to development.

The primary means employed by this bill are some mandatory zoning changes to increase the development of multi-family units, open space residential housing (formerly cluster development), and accessory units in existing single-family housing. Changes are made primarily to Chapter 40A (Zoning), Chapter 40R (Smart Growth Zoning and Housing Production) and 40R (Smart Growth School Cost Reimbursement). The zoning changes would apply to all communities in Massachusetts with a distinction made between rural towns (density of 8 units per acre in multifamily zones) and all other communities (density of 15 units per acre in multifamily zones). New zoning would be “by right,” without special permits or other development hurdles and generally could be passed by a simple majority of the community’s legislative body. Towns passing new multifamily housing or smart growth districts would qualify for Smart Growth school cost reimbursement starting in fiscal year 2020.

Some other provisions are: 1) a “community scale housing development demonstration program,” which would produce half of its units for low and moderate income families; 2) mechanisms for joint planning and development of land by contiguous communities; 3) establishment of a Housing and Economic Growth Cabinet; 4) identification of greyfields sites; and 5) various guidelines and reports to be carried out by the Dept. of Housing and Community Development.

**League Position:** LWVUS position on Meeting Basic Human Needs, Criteria for Housing Supply, [Impact on Issues 2016-2018](#), pp. 93-94. LWVMA position on Affordable Housing: “Streamlined permitting procedures for Smart Growth incentive programs that effectively encourage the use of Smart Growth principles, with funding sources that are consistent, reliable, and predictable.”