

Sponsor: Sen. Michael O. Moore

**PASS BILL S.1629 :
ACCESSIBLE MA ACT**

**AN ACT BUILDING A MORE
ACCESSIBLE MASSACHUSETTS**

**EVERYONE DESERVES TO LIVE AND PARTICIPATE IN THEIR COMMUNITIES- NOT
FORCED TO CHOOSE BETWEEN AN UNSAFE RESIDENCE AND A NURSING HOME**

- As spotlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic, living in nursing homes puts people at greater risk for disease than those who live independently. Over 60% of people who have died from the virus lived in nursing homes.
- 87% of our rapidly growing aging population does not want to relocate to nursing homes.
- An estimated 20%-40% of nursing home residents could live independently if we had enough accessible housing.
- According to the CDC, in-home falls from lack of accessibility features like grab bars cost Massachusetts \$972 million per year.
- The best way for older adults and people with disabilities to live full and safe lives is to build housing that can be adapted to meet their changing needs.
- The Massachusetts Architectural Access Board(MAAB) balances the interests of property owners and accessibility needs by establishing and enforcing building codes during permitting, which is more efficient and affordable. However, the MAAB does not have jurisdiction over renovations of buildings constructed before 1991.
- **Bill S. 1629 will close this loophole and require that adaptability features be added, when reasonable, to any building being gut-rehabilitated into multi-unit housing.**

TIME FOR MASSACHUSETTS TO PROVIDE ACCESSIBLE WORKPLACES- A WIN FOR ALL

- Over 15% of the population has a disability and over 70% of working-age people in MA with ambulatory disabilities are unemployed.
- Businesses cannot recruit or retain the best workers when their facilities are inaccessible and qualified employees are being denied their civil right to engage in meaningful employment.
- MAAB code does not require workspace accessibility even in new or extensively renovated buildings, failing to meet basic Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.
- **Bill S. 1629 would give the MAAB purview over workplaces, enforcing accessibility in new or extensively renovated workplaces will achieve crucial alignment with the ADA**
- The state will receive increased tax revenues and reduce expenditures for benefits.
- Everyone will benefit from the safety and convenience of workplace accessibility features. They will be assured that, if they or loved ones become disabled, they can continue to work.

For more about S.1629, email
Paul Spooner at pspooner@mwcil.org
or Chris Hoeh at cdhoeh@gmail.com