*Chapter 47*

*of the Acts of 2017*

T H E C O M M O N W E A L T H O F M A S S A C H U S E T T S

*In the One Hundred and Ninetieth General Court*

*AN ACT* making appropriations for the fiscal year 2018 for the maintenance of the departments, boards, commissions, institutions and certain activities of the Commonwealth, for interest, sinking fund and serial bond requirements and for certain permanent improvements.

*Whereas,* The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purpose, which is immediately to make appropriations for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2017, and to make certain changes in law, each of which is immediately necessary or appropriate to effectuate said appropriations or for other important public purposes, therefore it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of the public convenience.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:*

*\*\*\**

SECTION 78.  Section 1 of chapter 185C of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking out the first sentence and inserting in place thereof the following sentence:- The housing court department established pursuant to section 1 of chapter 211B shall include: (i) a western division consisting of the municipalities in Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden and Hampshire counties; (ii) a central division consisting of the municipalities in Worcester county and the municipalities of Ashland, Framingham, Holliston, Hopkinton, Hudson, Marlborough, Natick, Sherborn, Sudbury and Wayland; (iii) a northeastern division consisting of the municipalities in Essex county and the municipalities of Acton, Ashby, Ayer, Bedford, Billerica, Boxborough, Burlington, Carlisle, Chelmsford, Concord, Dracut, Dunstable, Everett, Groton, Lexington, Lincoln, Littleton, Lowell, Malden, Maynard, Melrose, North Reading, Pepperell, Reading, Shirley, Stoneham, Stow, Tewksbury, Townsend, Tyngsborough, Wakefield, Waltham, Watertown, Westford, Weston, Wilmington, Winchester and Woburn and the jurisdiction known as Devens established in chapter 498 of the acts of 1993; (iv) a southeastern division consisting of the municipalities in Barnstable, Bristol and Nantucket counties and the county of Dukes County and the municipalities of Carver, Duxbury, Halifax, Hanover, Hanson, Hingham, Hull, Kingston, Lakeville, Marion, Marshfield, Mattapoisett, Middleborough, Norwell, Pembroke, Plymouth, Plympton, Rochester, Rockland, Scituate and Wareham; (v) a metro south division consisting of the municipalities in Norfolk county, except Brookline, and the municipalities of Abington, Bridgewater, Brockton, East Bridgewater, West Bridgewater and Whitman; and (vi) an eastern division consisting of the municipalities in Suffolk county and the municipalities of Arlington, Belmont, Brookline, Cambridge, Medford, Newton and Somerville.

SECTION 79.  Said chapter 185C is hereby further amended by striking out section 4, as so appearing, and inserting in the place thereof the following section:-

Section 4.  The western division of the housing court department shall hold its sittings in the city of Springfield in Hampden county and at least 1 sitting each week in courthouse facilities in Berkshire, Franklin and Hampshire counties. The court, with the consent of the chief justice of the trial court, shall also sit in any other courthouse facilities as the chief justice of the housing court may consider expedient or convenient.

The eastern division of the housing court department shall hold at least 1 sitting each week in Suffolk county and at least 1 sitting each week in Middlesex county. The court, with the consent of the chief justice of the trial court, shall also sit in any other courthouse facilities as the chief justice of the housing court department may consider expedient or convenient.

The central division of the housing court department shall hold at least 1 sitting each week in the city of Worcester, at least 1 sitting each week in Middlesex county, at least 1 sitting each week in northern Worcester county and at least 1 sitting each week in southern Worcester county. The court, with the consent of the chief justice of the trial court, shall also sit in any other courthouse facilities as the chief justice of the housing court department may consider expedient or convenient.

The northeastern division of the housing court department shall hold at least 2 sittings each week in Essex county and at least 2 sittings each week in Middlesex county. The court, with the consent of the chief justice of the trial court, shall also sit in any other courthouse facilities as the chief justice of the housing court department may consider expedient or convenient.

The southeastern division of the housing court department shall hold at least 3 sittings each week in Bristol county, at least 1 sitting each week in Plymouth county and at least 1 sitting each week in Barnstable county. The court, with the consent of the chief justice of the trial court, shall also sit in any other courthouse facilities as the chief justice of the housing court department may consider expedient or convenient.

The metro south division of the housing court department shall hold at least 1 sitting each week in Norfolk county and at least 1 sitting each week in Plymouth county. The court, with the consent of the chief justice of the trial court, shall also sit in any other courthouse facilities as the chief justice of the housing court department may consider expedient or convenient.

SECTION 80.  Section 8 of said chapter 185C, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking out the first sentence and inserting in place thereof the following sentence:- There shall be 2 justices appointed for the western division, 2 justices appointed for the eastern division, 2 justices appointed for the central division, 2 justices appointed for the northeastern division, 2 justices appointed for the southeastern division, 2 justices appointed for the metro south division and 3 circuit justices who shall sit in any of the divisions as determined by the chief justice of the housing court department.

SECTION 81.  Section 1 of chapter 211B of the General Laws, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 7, the figure “378” and inserting in place thereof the following figure:- 383.

SECTION 82.  Section 2 of said chapter 211B, as so appearing, is hereby amended by striking out, in line 2, the figure “10” and inserting in place thereof the following figure:- 15.

\*\*\*

SECTION 153.  Except as otherwise specified, this act shall take effect as of July 1, 2017.