



## SUPPORT PASSAGE OF **HOUSE BILL 529** TO STRENGTHEN EMERGENCY AID TO THE ELDERLY, DISABLED AND CHILDREN (EAEDC)

### **LEAD SPONSORS: Senator Patricia Jehlen, Rep. Jim O'Day**

The Bill was reported favorably out of the Joint Committee on Elder Affairs and is now in the House Ways & Means Committee.

**39 OTHER CO-SPONSORS: Senators:** William Brownsberger, Sal DiDomenico, Jamie Eldridge, Barbara L'Italien, Jason Lewis, Joan Lovely, Michael Moore, and Marc Pacheco and **Representatives:** Brian Ashe, Christine Barber, Ed Coppinger, Marjorie Decker, Stephen DiNatale, Daniel Donahue, Gloria Fox, Sean Garballey, Kenneth Gordon, Danielle Gregoire, Patricia Haddad, Jonathan Hecht, Paul Heroux, Louis Kafka, Mary Keefe, Kay Khan, Timothy Madden, John Mahoney, Brian Mannal, Paul McMurtry, Denise Provost, Angelo Puppolo, David Rogers, Tom Sannicandro, Theodore Speliotis, Thomas Stanley, Benjamin Swan, Timothy Toomey, Steven Ultrino, RoseLee Vincent, and Chris Walsh

#### **What is EAEDC?**

EAEDC is a state-funded cash assistance and benefits program providing support to more than 21,000 extremely low-income individuals, administered by the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA).

#### **Who is served by EAEDC?**

- Extremely low-income adults 65 years of age or older who are in the process of applying for Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
- Adults experiencing a mental or physical disability that inhibits their ability to work for at least 60 days
- Participants in the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission's programs
- Certain caretakers of children who are not eligible to receive Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) program benefits or caretakers of adults with severe disabilities
- Lawfully present immigrants who are residents of Massachusetts

#### **How would this bill improve the EAEDC Program?**

**House Bill 529 - An Act Relative to Assisting Elders and People with Disabilities in the Commonwealth would:**

**1. Increase the EAEDC grant:** The typical monthly grant of \$303.70\* has not been increased since 1988. While EAEDC is a vital lifeline for program participants, the benefit levels are very low. We are proposing to match the levels provided under the TAFDC program for households of comparable size, so that, for example, one person on EAEDC could receive up to \$428/month (with rent allowance).

**2. Remove the shelter reduction/penalty for individuals experiencing homelessness:** EAEDC program participants who are experiencing homelessness receive a reduced grant of only \$92.80 per month. This monthly grant is significantly lower than the current grant for individuals who have housing and clearly is insufficient to allow these participants to meet their basic needs. By eliminating this grant reduction, EAEDC participants experiencing homelessness (in or out of a shelter) will not be further financially disrupted and may be able to transition into a more stable living arrangement sooner.

**3. Increase the allowable personal asset limit from \$250 to \$2,500:** Letting an individual have more than \$250 in total monthly assets will allow more EAEDC participants to have assets and to move toward housing stability (by being better able to afford ongoing rent, first month's rent, last month's rent, and security deposit payments). The bill language also would exclude the first \$15,000 in a vehicle's value when determining the asset limit (as in the TAFDC program), so that more EAEDC applicants with cars can be approved—which is especially vital in areas with limited or no public transportation.

**4. Create an annual cost of living adjustment (COLA) for EAEDC program participants:** Building in a COLA so that DTA can provide increased benefits in response to the wider economic conditions would ensure that participants do not fall behind further economically from year-to-year.

\*This is the amount provided to single individuals who are responsible for paying some monthly rent, known as "Living Arrangement A" [Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless, 15 Bubier St., Lynn, MA 01901-1704, 781-595-7570, www.masshomeless.org](http://www.masshomeless.org)

## Which organizations are endorsing House Bill 529?

As of Jan. 26, 2016, the bill has been endorsed by the following 70 organizations from across the Commonwealth:

Abby's House  
Action for Boston Community Development  
Aging Disabilities Resources Consortia of Southeastern Massachusetts  
A.R.I.S.E. for Social Justice  
Berkeley Retirement Home and Nursing Center  
Boston Area Rape Crisis Ctr.  
Boston Center for Independent Living  
Boston Homeless Solidarity Committee  
Bristol Elder Services, Inc.  
CAPIC (Community Action Programs Inter-City, Inc.)  
Catholic Charities Agency - Diocese of Springfield  
Catholic Charities Worcester County  
Catholic Charities, Archdiocese of Boston  
Catholic Social Services of Fall River, Inc.  
Central Boston Elder Services  
Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance  
Coastline Elderly Services, Inc.  
Common Cathedral  
Community Action Inc. of Haverhill  
Community Action Agency of Somerville, Inc.  
Community Day Center of Waltham  
Community Health & Advocacy Subcommittee of Student Leadership Committee at Ctr. for Primary Care, Harvard Medical School  
Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries  
Emmaus, Inc.  
Family Promise North Shore Boston  
First Church Shelter  
Greater Lynn Senior Services  
Haley House  
Harvard Square Homeless Shelter  
Haven from Hunger  
Hunger Homelessness Division of the Brandeis University Waltham Group  
Lazarus House Ministries  
Lowell Transitional Living Center  
Lynn Economic Opportunity  
Lynn Shelter Association  
MARCH- Massachusetts Association of Residential Care Homes  
Marie Esther Health Center, Inc.  
Massachusetts Association for Community Action (MASSCAP)  
Massachusetts Association of Councils on Aging  
Massachusetts Catholic Conference  
Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless  
Massachusetts Conference United Church of Christ - Task Team to End Homelessness  
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute  
Massachusetts Senior Action Council  
MetroBoston Aging Disabilities Resources Consortia  
MetroWest Aging Disabilities Resources Consortia  
Minuteman Senior Services  
My Brother's Table  
Mystic Valley Elder Services  
Old Colony Elder Services  
Our Father's House  
Pax Christi - Beverly  
Pine Street Inn  
Pula Services  
Rosie's Place  
Samaritan Inn  
Samaritan Steps, Inc.  
Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur - Ipswich Community  
Sisters of St. Anne, Social Concerns Committee, Marlborough, MA  
Somebody Cares New England  
Somerville Homeless Coalition  
Somerville-Cambridge Elder Services  
Southern Massachusetts Aging Disabilities Resources Consortia  
Springwell, Inc.  
St. Francis House  
The Pettengill House, Inc.  
The Psychological Center  
Voice of the Poor Committee for Social Justice, Attleboro District of St. Vincent de Paul  
Women's Lunch Place