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Committed to ensuring that everyone has a place to call home

June 2, 2016

Looking Ahead to Fiscal Year 2017: The Conference Committee Members Have Been Named to Iron Out the Differences Between the House and Senate Versions of the FY'17 State Budget

Preview of Key Housing, Homelessness, and Safety Net Issues up for Debate

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Greetings!

Though the Senate and House both have gone through their initial budget recommendation and debate processes for fiscal year 2017, we're not done yet! After the Senate's adoption of its version of the FY'17 budget on May 26th, we have now moved to the next phase of the budget process: Conference Committee.


Once the House and the Senate vote on their respective budgets, each branch appoints three members to a joint committee (the "Conference Committee") to work out and resolve all differences between the two budgets. The compromise budget that comes out of Conference Committee is then brought to the House and Senate members for a final vote before being sent to the Governor.

This year's House Conference Committee members were named today: Representatives [Brian Dempsey](#) (D-Haverhill, Chair of House Ways and Means), [Stephen Kulik](#) (D-Worthington, Vice Chair of House Ways and Means), and [Todd Smola](#) (R-Warren, Minority Member of House Ways and Means). The Senate Conference Committee members are Senators [Karen Spilka](#) (D-Ashland, Chair of Senate Ways and Means), [Sal DiDomenico](#) (D-Everett, Vice Chair of Senate Ways and Mean), and [Vinny deMacedo](#) (R-Plymouth, Minority Member of Senate Ways and Means).

We anticipate that the Conference Committee will begin its work next week. In order to ensure that the Conference Committee's budget has the best language and highest levels of funding possible for housing and homelessness issues, we will be sending a follow-up alert so you can help urge your legislators and the committee members to create a

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compromise budget that prioritizes these programs. **For a preview of our top three priorities, please see below.**

For program fact sheets and additional materials, please go to our [Present Policy Campaigns page](#) and our evolving [Conference Committee page](#).

Thank you for your advocacy and your continued support of housing and homelessness issues! We are in the homestretch now!

-Kelly

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FY'17 State Budget

Conference Committee members
have been named!

Representatives:

Brian Dempsey, Stephen Kulik, and Todd Smola

Senators:

Karen Spilka, Sal DiDomenico, and Vinny deMacedo

Advocate with us for the strongest possible budget on
housing, homelessness prevention, and safety net benefits!

Find out more at www.mahomeless.org/advocacy.



Conference Committee Priority Preview

Our top three priorities are:

- **Expanding access to the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) homelessness prevention program:** Please ask your legislators to support the Senate version of the RAFT line item (7004-9316), which expands the definition of family to include elders, people with disabilities, unaccompanied youth, and other household types and adds \$500,000 to serve these households, while retaining level funding of \$12.5 million for families with children under the age of 21. The [RAFT Conference Committee fact sheet](#) is here.
- **Allowing families to access Emergency Assistance (EA) family shelter before they are forced to stay in places not meant for human habitation:** Please ask your legislators to support the Senate version of the EA line item (7004-0101), which allows otherwise eligible families to enter EA without

having to prove that they already have stayed in an emergency room, car, campground, etc.

- **Funding housing and services for unaccompanied youth and young adults at at least \$2 million:** Please ask your legislators to support the Senate version of the unaccompanied youth line item (4000-0007), which is \$1 million more than the House version.

We will send out a follow-up alert with our full list of priorities in the next few days so you can reach out to your State Representative and Senator to ask them to weigh in with their colleagues on the FY'17 budget Conference Committee in support of the programs and funding levels for key housing, homelessness, and benefits programs.

Anxious to get started? Reach out to your legislators today about the top three priorities listed above. Legislators can be reached via the State House switchboard (617-722-2000) or directly through the links listed [here](#).

If you have additional time, please reach out directly to the conferees, via the links listed above with their names.

Please also thank your legislators for their work to make such strong investments in housing, homelessness, and benefits programs in this year's budget.

FY'17 Budget: House and Senate Recommendations for Housing, Shelter, Homelessness Prevention, and Cash Assistance Programs

To access the House's complete budget recommendations, please go to [FY'17 House budget recommendations](#). For the Coalition's analysis, please go to the [Coalition's House budget advocacy page](#).

To access the Senate's complete budget recommendations, please go to [FY'17 Senate budget recommendations](#). For the Coalition's analysis, please go to the [Coalition's Senate budget advocacy page](#).

We hope you will join us as the Coalition continues to push for the protection of housing and homelessness programs for FY'17. We will keep you informed of the progress as the state's budget makes it way through the final stages in the weeks ahead.

For more information, please contact Kelly Turley at kelly@mahomeless.org or 781-595-7570 x17.