

**Youth Without Homes Can't Wait:  
Please Support \$5 Million in the FY'20 Budget to Provide More Housing and Services to  
Unaccompanied Youth and Young Adults Experiencing Homelessness (Line Item 4000-0007)**



**FY'20 Budget Testimony to the Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
Presented by Molly Schulman  
April 2, 2019**

Hello Members of the Committee. My name is Molly Schulman and I am a community organizer and legislative advocate with the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless. I am here today to advocate for \$5 million dollars in the FY'20 state budget, Line Item 4000-0007 under the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, to address the housing and support service needs of unaccompanied youth and young adults, ages 24 and younger, who are experiencing homelessness.

Unfortunately, the youth from Bridge Over Troubled Waters who attended to give testimony today had to leave early so I will give testimony on their behalf and submit their testimony via email.

Just a couple of weeks ago, the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless hosted our annual Legislative Action Day at the State House. At that event, we heard from a series of youth and young adult speakers who were currently experiencing homelessness. They shared stories of encountering a myriad of roadblocks to housing stability, their difficulties accessing appropriate services, and most importantly, their resilience and drive to fight for the respect and dignity they deserve. I have been lucky not to have experienced homelessness in my life and in my work as an advocate and organizer, I am accountable to my peers who are fighting for safety, for respect, and for a dignified life.

Last year, the Massachusetts Commission on Unaccompanied Homeless Youth, in partnership with youth and youth providers, organized its fifth statewide youth homelessness survey. 2,150 youth responded to the survey and of those who responded about 24% said they were currently experiencing homelessness. On average, youth and young adults shared that they left home for the first time at age 16 and that the top reason why they left was because they had been fighting with a parent or guardian.

We are in an exciting moment in that FY'19 was the first year that each of the 10 regions across Massachusetts received funding from this line item. In order to make sure youth and young adults have the specific services they need based on their region, I am advocating for \$5 million for housing and wraparound services for unaccompanied youth under the Executive Office of Health and Human Services line item, 4000-0007. We have made great strides in Massachusetts

For more information, visit <http://mahomeless.org/advocacy> or contact Kelly Turley ([kelly@mahomeless.org](mailto:kelly@mahomeless.org)), James Saucedo ([james@mahomeless.org](mailto:james@mahomeless.org)), or Molly Schulman ([molly@mahomeless.org](mailto:molly@mahomeless.org)).

to support unaccompanied youth and young adults experiencing homelessness and I am excited to see all that will be possible as we continue to prioritize the needs of young people. Thank you for your time.

Respectfully submitted,

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