



RAAP Campaign

*Prevent homelessness by funding the
Rent Arrearage Assistance Program*

SCRIPT FOR CALLING SENATORS ON SEN. JEHLLEN'S AMENDMENT #797 TO FY'20 SENATE WAYS & MEANS BUDGET

The objectives of calling the offices of Senators about the FY'20 budget are:

1. To demonstrate ongoing, growing public support for the RAAP Campaign, and our goal of restoring and funding the rent arrearage assistance program;
2. To deliver messages from RAAP Campaign supporters direct to Senators, now that the Senate Ways and Means Committee has released its draft FY'20 budget, and the full Senate is considering amendments to the draft; and
3. To ask that Senators cosponsor Senator Patricia Jehlen's budget amendment #797, which would include \$7 million in funding for the rent arrearage assistance program within the FY'20 state budget, as proposed in House Bill 1264, and as a pilot within the existing Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) line item (7004-9316).

When calling, first share your name and ask to speak with a staff member that handles matters related to the state budget. If you are a constituent, or if your organization serves people in the Senator's district, be sure to share this information.

Once you are on the phone with the right staff member, introduce yourself by sharing who you are and where you live. If you are calling on behalf of your organization, let the staffer know about your organization's mission and the communities you serve.

Example 1: "Hi, thank you so much for taking my call. My name is [YOUR NAME], and I live in [CITY/TOWN]. I see the lack of affordable housing hitting my community every day, and many of us residents have nowhere to turn for help when we fall behind on our monthly rent."

Example 2: "Hi, thank you so much for taking my call. My name is [YOUR NAME], and I work for a social services organization in [CITY/TOWN] that addresses the needs of low-income people. We serve people in [COMMUNITIES/CITIES/TOWNS]. We see the high costs of housing having a negative impact on our clients on a daily basis."

Then, continue by sharing your support for addressing the housing instability that low-income people across the Commonwealth experience, by restoring the rent arrearage assistance program.

"I support the RAAP Campaign and the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless' efforts to restore the statewide rent arrearage assistance program, which would provide low-income people with a cash assistance resource to help them get caught up on back rent or mortgage payments, stay in their homes, and avoid becoming homeless. We have an opportunity to begin funding this policy solution through amendment #797 to the FY'20 Senate Ways and Means Budget, filed by Senator Jehlen. I ask Senator [SEN. NAME] to cosponsor Senator Jehlen's amendment, which would appropriate \$7 million for the rent arrearage assistance program in the FY'20 state budget, as proposed in House Bill 1264,

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and as a pilot within the existing Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) line item (7004-9316).

"Vulnerable households with the lowest incomes cannot wait any longer for rent arrearage assistance as a critical support for preventing both eviction and homelessness.

"Do you know whether Senator [SEN. NAME] plans to cosponsor Senator Jehlen's amendment #797? Would you like me to send you any follow-up information?"

"Thank you very much for your time and service in the State Legislature!"

After your call, please get in touch with the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless (MCH) to let us know how it went. Sharing any information or feedback you receive from legislative offices will help us remain best equipped to advocate for restoration of the rent arrearage assistance program.

If the person you speak with asks a question to which you don't have the answer, simply say that you don't have the answer, and offer to follow up after your call. For any questions or additional information, please call or email MCH at the contact information below.

Looking for names and phone numbers for your state legislators? Head to the website of the Massachusetts State Legislature at: <https://malegislature.gov/Search/FindMyLegislator>. This lookup tool will provide the names and contact information for your State Representative and State Senator based on a physical address. If you're interested in contacting legislators on behalf of an organization, it's possible that the cities and towns you serve are represented by more than one State Representative and State Senator. For help identifying your elected officials, or to make sure you've reached all legislators that represent the cities and towns your organization serves, call or email MCH staff at the contact information below.

For more information, contact James Saucedo at james@mahomeless.org / 781-595-7570 x 33 or Kelly Turley at kelly@mahomeless.org / 781-595-7570 x17. The RAAP Campaign is a campaign of the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless. Learn more at www.mahomeless.org/advocacy.

