



Pax Christi USA - Beverly  
c/o Karen Watkins, Co-chair  
5 Prospect St.  
Beverly, MA 01915  
Oct. 10, 2015

**TO:** Senator Barbara L'Italien and Representative Danielle Gregoire, Chairs of the Joint Committee on Elder Affairs and Members of this Committee

**REGARDING: SUPPORT FOR H.2077/S.2039 - AN ACT RELATIVE TO ASSISTING ELDERLY AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE COMMONWEALTH**

As an organizational endorser of the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless' Campaign to Strengthen Emergency Aid to Elderly, Disabled, and Children (EAEDC) Assistance, Pax Christi USA - Beverly, MA Chapter wants to go on record in asking the Joint Committee on Elder Affairs to give a favorable report for House Bill 2077 and Senate Bill 2039. We do so as part of living out the Vision of Pax Christi USA, the Catholic nonviolent, peace with justice movement, which includes standing up for disarmament, demilitarization and reconciliation with justice, inclusiveness, economic and interracial justice, human rights and care for creation.

Our small group comes from towns and cities in which there are approximately 637 EAEDC participants, and two individual shelters in Beverly and Salem, who are impacted by the EAEDC shelter deduction penalty of a reduced benefit of \$92.80 month. We act from the Catholic Social Justice Principal: justice requires that those with the greatest need have the first claim on society's resources, because they are most vulnerable.

29 years without any changes is a long time for EAEDC participants who are struggling to survive. Furthermore, the Commonwealth's General Fund has benefitted with its annual reimbursement from Social Security (FY 16 \$4.9 million) for most of what the state spent on these benefits for all the EAEDC participants who finally transfer onto SSI/SSDI. If this benefit increases, so won't the reimbursement.

These vital changes in the EAEDC Bill include: 1) removing the shelter deduction penalty for individuals experiencing homelessness; 2) providing an increase in the monthly benefit from \$303.70 to \$428; 3) Increase the personal asset limit from \$250 to \$2500; 4) create an annual cost of living adjustment for EAEDC participants.

Pax Christi USA - Beverly believes that this Bill will better enhance the basic human dignity and quality of life of the more than 20,000 EAEDC participants throughout the Commonwealth, and requests that your Committee takes this moral responsibility to the most vulnerable into account, as you deliberate on HB 2077 and SB2039.

In peace and solidarity,

Karen Watkins A.N.D. and Sister Linda Bessom S.N.D., Co-Chairs of Pax Christi USA - Beverly, MA