



MASSACHUSETTS COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

Committed to ensuring that everyone has a place to call home

January 22, 2015

Dear Legislator,

Thank you for your collaboration this past session to improve the lives of unaccompanied youth, families with children, and adults in Massachusetts. We are particularly grateful for the Legislature's passage of the unaccompanied youth homelessness bill, *An Act promoting housing and support services to unaccompanied homeless youths*, which was signed into law on January 6th.

As the 189th Legislative Session begins, the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless is asking for your support for three bills addressing critical gaps in resources for people experiencing homelessness and other low-income households. Specifically, **we are requesting you to co-sponsor the three following bills:**

An Act Relative to Assisting Elders and People with Disabilities in the Commonwealth
Lead sponsors: Representative James O'Day and Senator Patricia Jehlen
House Docket Number 2741

This bill would:

- Increase monthly grants under the Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled, and Children Program (EAEDC) to match the benefit levels provided under the Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children Program for households of comparable size
- Remove the 70% benefit reduction/penalty for individuals experiencing homelessness
- Increase the allowable personal asset limit from \$250 to \$2,500
- Create an annual cost of living adjustment for EAEDC program participants

An Act Providing a Homeless Bill of Rights
Lead Sponsor: Representative William Smitty Pignatelli
House Docket Number 691

This bill would:

- Ensure that people experiencing homelessness have the same rights as any other resident of Massachusetts by seeking to prevent discrimination based on housing status
- Reinforce the following rights:
 - The right to move freely in public spaces
 - The right to equal treatment by municipal agencies
 - Freedom from discrimination in employment
 - The right to emergency medical care
 - The right to register to vote and to vote
 - Freedom from disclosure of records
 - The right to a reasonable expectation of privacy of property
- Outline these rights as a statement of legislative intent, as a guide for state and municipal agencies

An Act to End Child Homelessness
Lead sponsor: Representative Denise Provost
House Docket Number 231

This bill would:

- Protect many children and families who are at imminent risk or experiencing homelessness from having to stay in places not meant for human habitation

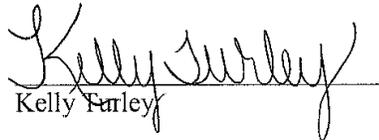
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- Require the Department of Children and Families (DCF), in consultation with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), to conduct an assessment to ensure that no child under the age of 18 would be forced to stay in a place not meant for human habitation upon a household's eviction from subsidized housing or termination from a publicly funded shelter
- For children at risk of having to stay in such conditions, DCF and DHCD would develop and implement a plan to ensure that they are housed in a safe location, with every reasonable effort being made to keep those children in the care and custody of their parents/guardians

Thank you for your consideration of these bills. Additional information about the EAEDC bill and the Bill of Rights for people experiencing homelessness is attached. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about the bills or co-sponsorship.

We very much look forward to collaborating with you during this legislative session to make greater strides toward reducing and ending homelessness across the Commonwealth!

Sincerely,



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