



**RUTHZEE LOUIJEUNE**  
**BOSTON CITY COUNCILOR AT-LARGE**

To: Senate President Karen Spilka  
Speaker of the House Ronald Mariano  
Senate Ways and Means Committee Chair Michael Rodrigues  
House Ways and Means Committee Chair Aaron Michlewitz

March 27, 2023

Re: Extending Chapter 257 eviction protections before they expire on March 31

Dear Senate President Spilka, Speaker Mariano, Chairperson Rodrigues, Chairperson Michlewitz,

As you may know, “Chapter 257”, a key eviction prevention tool, is set to expire on March 31st. Allowing this critical tool to expire now could result in pushing many families and individuals into homelessness, particularly our most vulnerable residents such as our seniors, Black & Brown residents, and individuals with children. I am asking that you take immediate action extending these protections until July 31, 2024 to allow more time for a permanent solution to be put into place.

Our office assists a significant number of families and individuals applying for assistance through the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) homelessness prevention program and the application process can be complex and require a significant amount of time for a tenant to gather their paperwork, the property owner to input their information, and the administering agency to process each application. While not perfect, Chapter 257 has been an essential protection for tenants waiting for rental assistance applications to be processed.

The Legislature extended the deadline in Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, and extended it again through March 31, 2023 in Chapter 42 of the Acts of 2022. The law ensures that tenants are not needlessly displaced and also requires landlords to upload notice to quit letters to a state tracking system, enabling agencies administering rental assistance to conduct outreach to landlords and

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tenants to prevent evictions.

There is broad agreement among policymakers that residents across Massachusetts are currently experiencing another housing crisis. Before Chapter 257 was enacted, tenants awaiting rental assistance who already were in eviction proceedings had few options. Since going into effect in January 2021, at least 9,000 case continuances have been granted under the law, and untold numbers of tenants have been able to stabilize their housing and prevent eviction simply by having the chance to complete the rental assistance process.

To summarize, chapter 257 is a key homelessness prevention tool that we know is working, at a time when housing instability is on the rise and the state is struggling to provide adequate shelter to families and individuals who are unhoused. Extending Chapter 257 is a simple and commonsense action that will prevent unnecessary evictions, as the state works to address the broader housing crisis.

I am calling upon the Legislature to act immediately to extend Chapter 257 until, at least, July 31, 2024, to ensure that protections afforded in Chapter 257 continue without disruption. Thank you for reviewing my comments *in support* of extending Chapter 257 eviction protections before they expire on March 31st. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely

Ruthzee Louijeune  
Boston City Councilor At-Large