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MASSACHUSETTS COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

Committed to ensuring that everyone has a place to call home

The Senate budget is now finalized. Thank you for your advocacy on key homelessness amendments to the FY'19 Senate budget!



May 25, 2018

Greetings!

Early this morning, the State Senate completed the debate on their version of the state's FY'19 budget. Throughout the three full days of debate, the Senate added many language changes and \$75.5 million in additional funding, bringing their recommended budget up to \$41.49 billion.

Senate -- Roll Call #408

S.4 -- Question on adoption of the amendment

YEAS.

Barrett, Michael J.	Jehlen, Patricia D.
Boncore, Joseph A.	Keenan, John F.
Brady, Michael D.	Lesser, Eric P.
Brownsberger, William N.	Lewis, Jason M.
Chandler, Harriette L.	L'Italien, Barbara A.
Chang-Diaz, Sonia	Lovely, Joan B.
Collins, Nick	Montigny, Mark C.
Creem, Cynthia Stone	Moore, Michael O.
Crighton, Brendan P.	O'Connor, Patrick M.
Cyr, Julian	O'Connor Ives, Kathleen
deMacedo, Viriato M.	Pacheco, Marc R.
DiDomenico, Sal N.	Rodrigues, Michael J.
Eldridge, James B.	Ross, Richard J.
Fattman, Ryan C.	Rush, Michael F.
Feeney, Paul R.	Spilka, Karen E.
Friedman, Cindy F.	Tarr, Bruce E.
Gobi, Anne M.	Timilty, Walter F.
Hinds, Adam G.	Tran, Dean A.
Humason, Donald F., Jr.	Welch, James T. -- 38.

NAYS -- 0.

Late last night the Senate *unanimously* passed the Emergency Assistance amendment, 38-0! See Roll Call #408 above and read more about that amendment and our other two key amendments below.

- **Emergency Assistance family shelter program (EA):** Senator Barbara L'Italien filed [Amendment #533](#) to ensure that families with children that are experiencing homelessness can file in-person applications for family shelter with staff from the Department of Housing and Community Development in at least the ten cities and towns that had offices as of January 1, 2018. This is in response to efforts to shift to a more telephonically based system/call center model, which would present challenges to many families lacking access to phones, computers, scanners, and fax machines. The amendment would add language to the DHCD administrative line item, 7004-0099, to maintain in-person application sites (in addition to telephonic options). [EA amendment fact sheet](#)

Amendment outcome: We are happy to report that this amendment passed [unanimously](#) on a roll call vote! We will work to make sure that the Conference Committee includes the Senate language on maintaining in-person access to Emergency Assistance applications, and will share next steps soon. In the meantime, please thank your Senator for passing it. Special thanks to Senator L'Italien for speaking on the Senate floor about the importance of maintaining statewide in-person access to applications, and to Senate President Harriette Chandler, Senate Ways and Means Chair Karen Spilka, and Senate Ways and Means Vice Chair Joan Lovely for all of their work to pass the amendment.

- **Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT):** We were thrilled to see that the SWM budget included the full recommended funding for RAFT of \$18.5 million, as well as language to maintain access for elders, people with disabilities, and unaccompanied youth. Senator Jamie Eldridge filed [Amendment #680](#) to tweak the language in line item 7004-9316 so that at least \$3 million is set aside for households without children under the age of 21, instead of no more than \$3 million. [RAFT amendment fact sheet](#)

Amendment outcome: We are happy to report that this amendment passed! (It passed on a simple voice vote, not a roll call vote.) We will work to make sure that the Conference Committee includes the Senate language and funding for RAFT, and will share next steps soon. In the meantime, please thank your Senator for passing it. Special thanks to Senator Eldridge for speaking on the Senate floor on the critical need to expand access to and funding for homelessness prevention resources for individuals, and to Senate Leadership for their work to pass the amendment.

- **Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled, and Children program (EAEDC):** Senator Pat Jehlen filed [Amendment #453](#) to remove the EAEDC homelessness penalty so that participants experiencing homelessness receive full monthly grants of \$303.70/month instead of only \$92.80/month. Based on FY'18 numbers year-to-date, an estimated 542 individuals would benefit each month from this change, at a cost of only \$1.4 million/year. The amendment would add language to line item 4408-1000. [EAEDC amendment fact sheet](#)

Amendment outcome: Unfortunately, this amendment was rejected, but the language still is alive for the Conference Committee deliberations, as it was included in the House version of the budget. We will share next steps soon. Please thank your Senator if they are listed in the amendment link above as a cosponsor. Special thanks to Senator Jehlen for strenuously advocating for the amendment and related EAEDC bill, [Senate Bill 2039](#).

The State House switchboard number is 617-722-2000. You also can look up who your Senator is via www.wheredoivotema.com.

[Our Senate amendment page](#) has more details.

[Please let us know if you receive any feedback](#) from your Senator in response to your outreach.

We anticipate the Conference Committee members officially will be named by the first week in June. The Conference Committee will aim to develop a consensus budget by late June, before the new fiscal year begins on July 1st. We will send out a follow-up action alert then with the next steps.

Thank you again for your advocacy-- online, over the phone, and in-person. Your actions will strengthen access to homelessness prevention resources, housing, and benefits!

With gratitude,
Kelly

Kelly Turley
Associate Director
kelly@mahomeless.org

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