



MASSACHUSETTS COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS



Committed to ensuring that everyone has a place to call home

June 21, 2016

## **There's Still Time to Weigh In! Help Advocate on Housing, Homelessness, and Safety Net Issues as the Legislature Finalizes the FY'17 State Budget**

**Read Below for More Details on Housing, Homelessness, and Safety Net Issues Up for Debate**

### **Quick Links**

- [Coalition's home page](#)
- [Coalition's Conference Committee webpage](#)
- [Online action to support key Conference Committee priorities](#)
- [Online action to support the expansion of the RAFT homelessness prevention program](#)
- [Online action to support passage of the EAEDC bill for elders + people with disabilities](#)
- [Boston Globe coverage of the EA budget debate](#)
- [Senate budget page](#)
- [House budget page](#)
- [Governor's FY'17 budget proposal](#)
- [Coalition's FY'17 budget priorities](#)
- [Coalition's Present Policy](#)

### **Greetings!**

With the July 1st start of state fiscal year 2017 just around the corner, the Legislature's Joint Conference Committee on the FY'17 budget has been engaged in difficult deliberations to work out the differences between the House and Senate proposed budgets for the year ahead. The compromise budget that comes out of the Conference Committee then will be brought to the House and Senate members for a final vote before being sent to the Governor.

Thank you to everyone who has been weighing in with support for the Coalition's [top priorities](#) and [full priority list](#) with their [own legislators](#) and this year's six budget conferees: Representatives [Brian Dempsey](#) (D-Haverhill, Chair of House Ways and Means), [Stephen Kulik](#) (D-Worthington, Vice Chair of House Ways and Means), and [Todd Smola](#) (R-Warren, Minority Member of House Ways and Means) and Senators [Karen Spilka](#) (D-Ashland, Chair of Senate Ways and Means), [Sal DiDomenico](#) (D-Everett, Vice Chair of Senate Ways and Mean), and [Vinny deMacedo](#) (R-Plymouth, Minority Member of Senate Ways and Means).

Since our last alert, the Baker Administration notified the Legislature that anticipated revenues for FY'17 could fall \$450 million-\$750 million below benchmarks. This will make it even more difficult to make positive strides in FY'17-- and it makes it even more necessary for you to **please continue to ask your own State Representative and Senator to actively support the housing and homelessness priorities listed in our letter to the conferees. Please also take a minute to sign our latest online action to legislators, focused on Conference Committee budget requests.** With your collaboration, we can ensure that the Conference Committee's budget has the best language and highest levels of funding possible for housing and homelessness issues.

**For more details on our top three priority line items (RAFT,**

[Campaigns page](#)

[Overview of budget process](#)

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[!\[\]\(339a16584d5da0f0a3ca4e9ec17bf6a1\_img.jpg\) View on Instagram](#)

**Emergency Assistance, and housing and services for unaccompanied youth), please [follow this link](#).**

For program fact sheets and additional materials, please go to our [Present Policy Campaigns page](#) and our [Conference Committee page](#).

Thank you for your advocacy and your continued support of housing and homelessness issues! We really are in the homestretch now!

-Kelly

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## Conference Committee Priorities

Our top three priorities are:

- **Expanding access to the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) homelessness prevention program:** Please ask your legislators to support the Senate version of the RAFT line item (7004-9316), which expands the definition of family to include elders, people with disabilities, unaccompanied youth, and other household types and adds \$500,000 to serve these households, while retaining level funding of \$12.5 million for families with children under the age of 21. The [RAFT Conference Committee fact sheet](#) and [one-minute online action](#) are here.
- **Allowing families to access Emergency Assistance (EA) family shelter before they are forced to stay in places not meant for human habitation:** Please ask your legislators to support the Senate version of the EA line item (7004-0101), which allows otherwise eligible families to enter EA without having to prove that they already have stayed in an emergency room, car, campground, etc. The [Emergency Assistance Conference Committee fact sheet](#) is here. Yesterday's front page [Boston Globe coverage of the EA budget debate](#) is here.
- **Funding housing and services for unaccompanied youth and young adults at at least \$2 million:** Please ask your legislators to support the Senate version of the unaccompanied youth line item (4000-0007), which is \$1 million more than the House version. The [unaccompanied youth Conference Committee fact sheet](#) is here.

Our [full priority list](#), including our Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program, HomeBASE, Alternative Housing Voucher Program, Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled, and Children Program and other requests, is here.

## Take Action!

Please reach out to your State Representative and Senator to ask them to weigh in with their colleagues on the FY'17 budget Conference Committee in support of [these programs and funding](#)

levels for key housing, homelessness, and benefits programs.

**Please also sign our [simple online action](#) to your State Representative and Senator here.**

Legislators can be reached via the State House switchboard (617-722-2000) or directly through the links listed [here](#). To look up legislators by your home address, go to [www.wheredoivotema.com](http://www.wheredoivotema.com).

If you have additional time, please reach out directly to the conferees, via the links listed above with their names.

### **Boston Globe Coverage of the Effort to Prevent Families from Having to Stay in Places Not Meant for Human Habitation**

#### **Costs at heart of emergency shelter eligibility debate**



JOHN BLANDING/GLOBE STAFF/FILE

**Homeless people waited to be admitted to the Boston Night Center last January.**

By [Joshua Miller](#) | GLOBE STAFF JUNE 19, 2016

Advocates call it one of the state's cruelest requirements. Before some poor homeless families can qualify for taxpayer-funded shelter and motel rooms, they must spend a night in a place "unfit for human habitation" — such as an emergency room, park bench, or campground — to be legally homeless in the eyes of the state.

To change that, the state Senate quietly passed a measure last month dropping the

# MAKE A DIFFERENCE TODAY!

# 4,458

HOUSEHOLDS WOULD HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO  
REGAIN STABILITY BY EXPANDING ACCESS TO RAFT,  
A KEY HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION PROGRAM  
(LINE ITEM 7004-9316)

<http://tinyurl.com/actnow4raft>

## FY'17 Budget: House and Senate Recommendations for Housing, Shelter, Homelessness Prevention, and Cash Assistance Programs

To access the House's complete budget recommendations, please go to [FY'17 House budget recommendations](#). For the Coalition's analysis, please go to the [Coalition's House budget advocacy page](#).

To access the Senate's complete budget recommendations, please go to [FY'17 Senate budget recommendations](#). For the Coalition's analysis, please go to the [Coalition's Senate budget advocacy page](#).

We hope you will join us as the Coalition continues to push for the protection of housing and homelessness programs for FY'17. We will keep you informed of the progress as the state's budget makes it way through the final stages in the weeks ahead.

**For more information, please contact Kelly Turley at [kelly@mahomeless.org](mailto:kelly@mahomeless.org) or 781-595-7570 x17.**