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May 2, 2019

Greetings!

Thank for all of your work to strengthen the House of Representatives' version of the [FY'20 state budget](#). While the overall budget was relatively strong on issues related to homelessness, housing, and benefits, none of the key amendments we were pushing to make the budget even stronger were included in the final budget. (See [State House News coverage](#) for insights into the deliberation process.)

Even though our amendments were not included, we know that the additional advocacy did have an impact, with large numbers of Representatives cosponsoring amendments and speaking up in the caucuses.

Next week, the budget process will shift to the Senate, and House members still will have a say before the final budget recommendations emerge from the Legislature this summer.

Key House Amendments and Outcomes

- [Amendment #1127](#): Rent Arrearage Assistance Program (RAAP) amendment to line item 7004-9316 filed by Representative Marjorie Decker to create a \$7 million upstream homelessness prevention pilot

program within the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition program (RAFT) to help households pay for back rent and mortgage payments: [fact sheet](#) (updated 4-17-19). **Outcome:** Sixty-four Representatives officially supported this amendment. Unfortunately, this amendment was not included in the final House version of the budget.

- [Amendment #1124](#): Emergency Assistance (EA) amendment to line item 7004-0101 filed by Representative Marjorie Decker to ensure that families experiencing homelessness do not have to sleep in places not meant for human habitation before becoming eligible for EA shelter: [fact sheet](#) (PDF, updated 4-16-19) **Outcome:** Sixty Representatives officially supported this amendment. Unfortunately, this amendment was not included in the final House version of the budget.
- [Amendment #883](#): Youth homelessness amendment to line item 4000-0007 filed by Representative Jim O'Day to increase funding for housing and wraparound services for unaccompanied youth and young adults experiencing homelessness: [fact sheet](#) (PDF, updated 4-16-19) **Outcome:** Sixty-five Representatives officially supported this amendment. Unfortunately, this amendment was not included in the final House version of the budget.
- [Amendment #765](#): Mass ID access amendment to create a new outside section of the budget filed by Representative Kay Khan to ease access to standard Mass IDs for people experiencing homelessness: [fact sheet](#) (PDF, updated 4-16-19). **Outcome:** Fifty-three Representatives officially supported this amendment. Unfortunately, this amendment was not included in the final House version of the budget.

You can see if your Representative signed on to particular amendments by clicking the amendment numbers above. If so, please thank them. You can look up your State Representative via www.wheredoivotema.com or call the State House switchboard at 617-722-2000.

See our updated [FY'20 budget chart](#) for details on these line items and other key line items related to homelessness, housing, and benefits, and information about budget amendments that were filed to improve upon the HWM budget (see columns G-J).

Senate Budget Anticipated Timeline

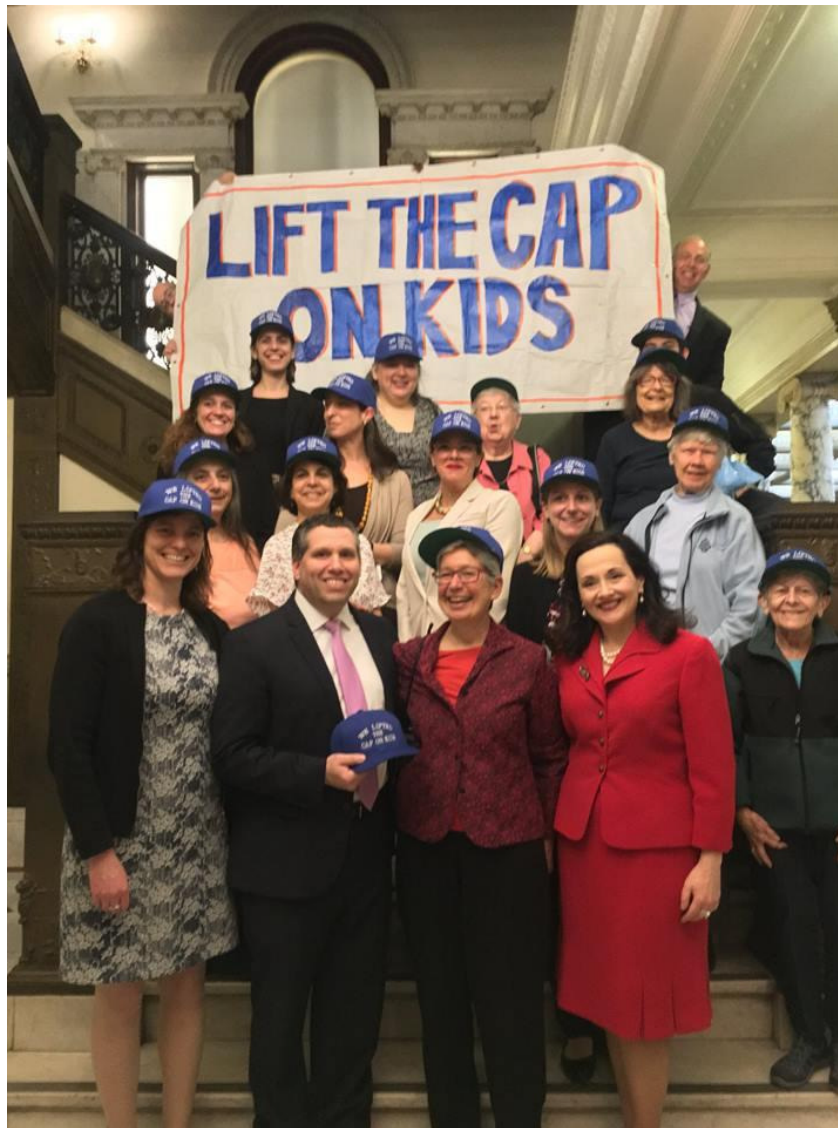
It's almost time for the Senate budget debate! According to State House News, the Senate Ways and Means Committee is set to release its recommendations this upcoming Tuesday, May 7th. Senators will have until noon on Friday, May 10th to submit budget amendments, and the Senate debate will begin on Tuesday, May 21st. We will be working to gather amendment cosponsors over the next two weeks, and once again will be looking for your partnership.

Thank you for your advocacy and collaboration to push for a #BudgetToEndHomelessness!

Please keep reading below for updates on advocacy efforts to Lift the Cap on Kids and on this year's Massachusetts Youth Count.

With gratitude,

Kelly Turley
Associate Director
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Massachusetts Finally Lifts the Cap on Kids and Ends the Punitive Welfare Family Cap Rule

Last Thursday, the Senate took the final vote needed for the Legislature to officially end the punitive Massachusetts state policy that denied Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) benefits to children conceived after their family began receiving welfare benefits. The 37-3 vote officially overrode a veto from Governor Baker. Now, the Department of Transitional Assistance is beginning the process of contacting families of the estimated 8,700 children impacted, increasing ongoing benefits, and providing retroactive payments going back to January 1st. Families will begin receiving an estimated additional \$100/month for each child previously excluded by the family cap rule.

We are especially grateful to Senator Sal DiDomenico and Representative Marjorie Decker, the State House leads on this effort; Senate President Karen Spilka; House Speaker Robert DeLeo; Massachusetts Law Reform Institute and Greater Boston Legal Services, the advocacy leads on the campaign; and the more than 120 other members of the [Lift Our Kids Coalition](#).

Read more about the vote in this [MassLive article](#).





Massachusetts Youth Count 2019 Continues!

Today is Day 21 of [Massachusetts Youth Count 2019](#). We are proud to be a key partner of the Massachusetts Commission on Unaccompanied Homeless Youth to plan and oversee the sixth annual Youth Count. This year's Youth Count will run for one month, ending on Sunday, May 12th.

If you are an unaccompanied youth/young adult under 25 and are experiencing housing instability-- or you work with young people without housing-- please check out our [Youth Count 2019 page](#).

The survey can be taken online: [English](#) and [Spanish](#); or in print form: [English](#), [Spanish](#), [Haitian Kreyol](#), [Cape Verdean Creole](#), and [Portuguese](#). Results from the survey will strengthen our advocacy efforts to expand housing and services for unaccompanied youth and young adults experiencing homelessness.

You can read about [last year's Youth Count results](#) here, and more about [how funds in this year's state budget are being used to serve youth and young adults experiencing homelessness](#) (PDF).