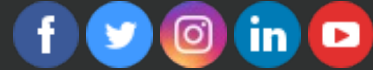


View our advocacy page



Committed to ensuring that everyone has a place to call home

February 1, 2019

Greetings!

Today is the general bill cosponsorship deadline at the State House. We are so grateful for all of your advocacy the past few weeks to gain cosponsors on key bills to promote housing stability, economic supports, and human rights. Please help us make a stronger impact by reaching out to your State Representative and Senator today in support of these important bills. See below for more details.

Thank you for your partnership and interest!

With gratitude,

Kelly Turley
Associate Director
kelly@mahomeless.org



Help Us Secure Cosponsors for Key Bills for the New Legislative Session Before Today's Deadline

As you know, the Coalition has been working with numerous key legislators

to file and refile critical legislation related to homelessness, housing, and benefits for the 2019-2020 legislative session. ([See the list at this link](#) and a partial list below).

Until 4:59 p.m. today, both Representatives and Senators can sign on as cosponsors to bills filed in either chamber. (After today, only Senators will be able to sign on to Senate filed bills; Representatives will not be able to newly cosponsor bills from either the House or Senate.)

Please reach out to your State Representative and Senator's offices this morning or early afternoon to ask them to cosponsor the bills listed below and [here](#). By clicking the link to the docket files, you can see if your legislators have already signed on.* You can find their contact information by going to www.wheredoivotema.com or malegislature.gov/Search/FindMyLegislator. You also can call the State House switchboard and ask to be connected with their offices: 617-722-2000.

** Currently, the House docket files are not publicly available on their website, so the ones attached here are not the most up-to-date.*

Top Bill Priority Campaigns

- Re-establish an upstream statewide rental arrearage program to help households (families, youth, elders, people with disabilities, et al.) avoid homelessness by providing back rent assistance

- Lead Sponsor: Representative Marjorie Decker
- Docket Number: [House Docket 2395](#) (PDF)
- [Fact sheet](#) (PDF)
- The program would be under the Departments of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and allow access to resources before a household has begun the eviction process. Eligible households could qualify for funding to cover up to 4 months' back rent or back mortgage payments. It would be a companion program to the existing Residential Assistance for Families in Transition program (RAFT), which currently only is available later on in the eviction or foreclosure process.

- Ensure that families experiencing homelessness do not have to stay in a place not meant for human habitation before being eligible for Emergency Assistance (EA) family shelter and services

- Lead Sponsor: Representative Marjorie Decker
- Docket Number: [House Docket 2406](#) (PDF)
- [Fact sheet](#) (PDF)
- Over 3,500 families have stayed in places not meant for human habitation before later being approved for shelter since a misguided policy was implemented in 2012 requiring many families to do so. See the chart below.

- Ease access to standard Massachusetts ID cards for people experiencing homelessness by eliminating the \$25 fee and allowing alternative ways to verify Massachusetts residency without requiring a permanent address

- Lead Sponsors: Senator Harriette Chandler and Representative Kay Khan
- Docket Numbers: [Senate Docket 667](#) and [House Docket 1263](#) (PDF)
- [Fact sheet](#) (PDF)
- This bill would allow access to standard Mass IDs, not REAL ID Act-compliant Mass IDs, for which residents must provide additional verifications that meet federal standards.

- Improve the Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled, and Children program (EAEDC)

- Lead Sponsors: Senator Pat Jehlen and Representative Jim O'Day
- Docket Numbers: [Senate Docket 1382](#) and [House Docket 605](#) (PDF)
- [Fact sheet](#) (PDF)
- This bill would put the recent removal of the EAEDC homelessness penalty into statute, increase monthly grant levels, provide an annual cost of living adjustment, and increase the program's asset limit from \$250 to \$2,500.

- Establish a bill of rights for people experiencing homelessness

- Lead Sponsors: Senator Becca Rausch and Representative Smitty Pignatelli
- Docket Numbers: [Senate Docket 1952](#) and [House Docket 2776](#) (PDF); very similar legislation also was filed by Senator Nick Collins: [Senate Docket 2170](#)
- [Fact sheet](#) (PDF)
- This bill would be a statement of legislative intent, recognizing and affirming various rights of people experiencing homelessness, such as the right to move freely in public spaces, the right to confidentiality of records, the right to privacy of property, the right to register to vote and to vote, etc.

- Promote the safety, dignity, and civil rights of people experiencing homelessness

- Lead Sponsors: Senator Becca Rausch and Representative Liz Miranda
- Docket Numbers: [Senate Docket 1950](#) and [House Docket 3764](#) (PDF)
- This bill would build on the work to decrease discrimination and to establish a bill of rights (see above), and would provide additional civil rights protections for people experiencing homelessness. The bill would affirm the right to rest, eat, pray, and be in public spaces by amending the Commonwealth's public spaces laws ([Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 45](#)), amend the Commonwealth's voting laws to affirm the right to register to vote without a permanent address ([Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 50, Section 1](#)), amend the Commonwealth's anti-discrimination laws to include housing status ([Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 151B](#)), and repeal archaic sections of Massachusetts General Laws regarding so-called "tramps", "vagrants", and "vagabonds" ([Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 272](#), Sections 63-69).

See our [full list of bill priorities](#) here. You also can [read the packet we delivered to legislators](#) (PDF) here.



MASSACHUSETTS COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

LEGISLATIVE
ACTION DAY



Committed to ensuring that everyone has a place to call home.

Register Today to Be Part of

Legislative Action Day 2019

Please [register today](#) for [Legislative Action Day 2019](#), taking place at the Massachusetts State House on Thursday, February 28th. Look forward to hearing from inspiring speakers, learning how to advocate with legislators, and meeting with your state legislators and legislative staff to talk about issues and policy recommendations to address homelessness in Massachusetts.

This year's event will be hosted by State Representative Jim O'Day in the Great Hall (second floor). Registration and light breakfast will begin at 9 a.m., and the formal agenda will run from 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. In the afternoon, participants will meet with legislative offices. Just indicate on your registration form if you need help setting up meetings with your legislators, and we will work to set up appointments for you.

Registration is quick, easy, and free: [Register now.](#)

If you would like to be an **event-day volunteer**, please [sign up here](#).

If you are interested in **being a speaker** and sharing your personal testimony at the event, or helping the Coalition identify speakers, please [contact Kelly](#).

Thank you!