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TO: The Joint Committee on Elder Affairs
FROM: Joseph J. Sherman, Esq.
DATE: September 17, 2019
RE: **An Act Relative to Assisting Elders and People with Disabilities in the Commonwealth**

Dear Senator Patricia Jehlen and Representative Ruth Balser, Chairs of the Joint Committee on Elder Affairs, and Members of the Committee:

As a legal aid attorney, I work closely with low income and homeless individuals on a daily basis. By and large, they struggle to get by on what little resources they have, and many of them are unable to work to increase their income. Instead, they have no choice but to rely on family and friends for support, if they are lucky enough to have family and friends to turn to. For those that don't, state and federal benefits programs are their only saving grace. EAEDC is that saving grace for many Massachusetts residents.

But for clients experiencing homelessness, EAEDC does not adequately equip them to find safe, permanent housing, nor does it provide enough income to support them in their daily lives. This bill would dramatically improve the lives of those Massachusetts residents in need by increasing the EAEDC grant, which has not been increased since 1988; by enabling recipients to save more than \$250; by eliminating the homelessness penalty; and by ensuring that the EAEDC grant is responsive to a changing cost of living in the future. Our communities need this.

Respectfully Submitted,

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