



August 21, 2017

The Members of the Joint Committee on Housing
State of Massachusetts Legislature

Dear Committee Members:

I am writing in support of House Bill 659, An Act to protect Families Experiencing Homelessness from Having to Sleep in Unsafe Places. At Julie's, in FY17, our participants are 39% Hispanic 31.7% Caucasian, 26.8% African American, and 2.5% Asian. Families come to Julie's from South Boston, Dorchester, Jamaica Plain, Mattapan, Charlestown, East Boston, Roxbury, Brighton, Hyde Park, Cambridge, Braintree, Weymouth, Revere and Quincy. Families that travel from outside of Greater Boston may have been transferred out of Boston due to the shelter system, but continue to remain at Julie's. 51% are homeless, living in the shelter system or "couch surfing," moving from place to place, while the rest live in public housing.

For the first time since our founding in 1974, over 50% are currently enrolled families are homeless. Our case managers work with our families to advocate and secure safe housing. They have witnessed and experienced housing that is sometimes unsafe and totally inappropriate for preschool children.

It is our understanding that this proposal bill currently resides in your committee. We strongly encourage you to please report this bill favorably out of the Joint Housing Committee for a full vetting and consideration.

Thank you for your advocacy and support for some of the most vulnerable families in the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

Robert D. Monahan
Executive Director

cc: Senator Joseph Boncore, Senate Chair, Joint Committee on Housing
Senator Linda Dorcea Forry, Senate Vice Chair, Joint Committee on Housing
Representative Kevin Honan, House Chair, Joint Committee on Housing
Representative Joseph McGonagle, House Vice Chair, Joint Committee on Housing
Sister Linda Bessom, SND, MA Coalition for the Homeless