

January 1, 2024

The Honorable Senator Lydia Edwards
Chair Joint Committee on Housing
24 Beacon Street, Room 413-C Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Representative James Arciero
Chair Joint Committee on Housing
24 Beacon Street, Room 146, Boston, MA 02133

RE: Letter of Support from the Supportive Housing Pipeline Coalition

Dear Chair Arciero and Chair Edwards,

Thank you for your efforts to date to keep residents safe, healthy, and housed. On behalf of the Supportive Housing Pipeline Coalition, we write to you as housing advocates and providers, healthcare institutions, and nonprofit and philanthropic leaders committed to transforming the homeless response system and advancing long-term housing solutions throughout our region.

We urge you to add the language from HB.1354: SB.855 – *An Act to create and implement a Massachusetts Flexible Supportive Housing Subsidy Pool Program to the Flex Pool language in the Affordable Homes Act (AHA).*

By adding the language from HB.1354: SB.855 to the Affordable Homes Act SECTION 45, CHAPTER 121H SUPPORTIVE HOUSING POOL FUND, the original innovation and intent of the bill would be fully realized. Specifically, the inserting the language from H. 1354 back into the Supportive Housing Pool Fund section of the AHA would do the following:

- Braid existing state line items for housing and healthcare into a unified, flexible funding stream, managed by a third-party nonprofit, to support trauma-informed service delivery, regional coordination efforts, and integrated services.
- Strengthen the coordination and delivery of supportive services to individuals, youth, and families experiencing homelessness.
- Ensure that existing state programs are deployed equitably to reach our most vulnerable residents.
- Create a statewide Funder's Collaborative to End Homeless, tasked with securing private contributions to the MFSHP and seeding local innovations.
- Improve outcomes and identify best practices for sustained investments.

Supportive housing is a highly effective, cost-efficient strategy that combines affordable housing with intensive, coordinated services to help people struggling with substance use disorders, chronic physical and behavioral health issues maintain stable housing and access critical health care services. **According to a national study from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, this model saves an average of over \$6,000 a year per person in healthcare costs.** Furthermore, according to our own Massachusetts Pay For Success Initiative, which served more than 1,000 vulnerable individuals, there was a cost savings to healthcare in the amount of \$5,257 per person per year. Of those 1,064 served by the Pay For

Success initiative, 84% of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness who receive supportive services and a housing voucher remain housed one year later.

We, the undersigned, respectfully ask the Committee to add the language of HB.1354: SB.855, to the existing Supportive Housing Pool Fund language in the Affordable Homes Act, SECTION 45, CHAPTER 121H SUPPORTIVE HOUSING POOL FUND. By including the full language from the bill, the Affordable Homes Act will gain all of the innovations for addressing the need for permanent supportive housing that HB.1354: SB.855 provides.

Together, we have an opportunity to re-imagine our region's housing infrastructure and services and expand access to safe, decent, affordable homes for our next generation. Thank you for considering our testimony and for prioritizing the needs of residents, youth, and families experiencing homelessness. We stand ready to work with you, the administration, and service providers across the region to help expand long-term housing solutions and address the region's growing homelessness crisis.

Sincerely,

United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley
Berkshire United Way
Cape and Islands United Way
Northern Berkshire United Way
United Way of Central
Massachusetts United Way of Fall
River
United Way of Greater Plymouth County
United Way of Greater Fall River
United Way of Pioneer Valley
United Way of South Central MA
United Way of Tri-County

ORGANIZATIONAL SUPPORTERS

Action Inc.
Alliance of Cambridge Tenants (ACT)
Arise For Social Justice
Asian Community Development
Corporation
Attleboro Public Library
Attleboro Public Schools
Berkshire County Regional Housing
Authority
Boston's Higher Ground
CAPIC
Catholic Charities
Catholic Social Services
Caritas Communities
Children's Law Center of MA

Children's Services of Roxbury
Citizens' Housing and Planning Association (CHAPA)
City of Springfield
City of Taunton, Department of Human Services
Community Action Agency of Somerville, Inc.
Community Action Programs Inter-City
Community Counseling of Bristol County
Craig's Doors
CRE Strategic Advisors
CSH
East Boston Social Centers
Eliot CHS/Homeless Services
Eliot Community Human Services
Emmaus Inc.
Everett Haitian Community Center
(EHCC)
Family Advisory Committee
Family Service Association
FamilyAid Boston
Father Bill's and
MainSpring Gandara
Center
GreenRoots
Harborlight Community Partners
Heading Home
Health Imperatives
Hildebrand Family Self-Help Center
Homes For Families
Home City Development, Inc.
HomeStart, Inc.
IBA-Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción
Inter-Church Council of Greater New
Bedford
Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action
Justice 4 Housing
Kit, Boston
La Colaborativa
La Comunidad, Inc.
Latinos unidos en Massachusetts
LEO Inc.
Lynn Housing Authority and Neighborhood Development
Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations (MACDC)
Massachusetts Association of Behavioral Health Systems
Massachusetts Association for Mental Health
Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless
Massachusetts Housing & Shelter Alliance
MassHire Holyoke
Metro Housing|Boston

National Association of Social Workers (NASW)
NeighborWorks Housing Solutions
Neighborhood Development
New Hope Inc.
North Shore Community Development Coalition
Nuestra Comunidad
Opportunity Communities
Pine Street Inn
Planning Office for Urban Affairs
Preservation of Affordable Housing
(POAH) Project Hope
Rural Development, Inc.
St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal
Church
Somerville Homeless Coalition, Inc.
South Coast Regional Network to End Homelessness
Southcoast Leadership Council to End Homelessness
Southeastern Massachusetts SER-Jobs for Progress, Inc
The Arc of Bristol County
The Home for Little Wanderers
The Neighborhood Developers / CONNECT, Chelsea
Union
The HAVEN Project
Together We Stand Corporation
Town of Dartmouth, MA
Urban Edge
Union Capital Boston
Victory Programs, Inc
Way Finders
Wellspring House, Inc.
Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness
WinnCompanies
YWCA Malden
YWCA Southeastern Massachusetts

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTERS

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President & CEO, BayCoast Bank

Kristina B Davis
Partner,
Deloitte

Sharon LaFleur
Program Director - Children's Behavioral Health Services, Family Service Association

State Representative Steven Howitt
Massachusetts House of Representatives

Margaret McSweeney
Volunteer Coordinator and Advancement Associate, Our Sisters' School

Emily Rothschild
Director of Special Projects, NeighborWorks Housing Solutions

Joyce Livramento-Young
Director of ABE Programs/Director of Personnel, SER-Jobs for Progress

Julie Sanders
Director of EPHP/CCBHC, SSTAR

Eric Burns
Community Connector, Vinfen

Jason Boyle
Allston Brighton Community Development Corporation (ABCDC)

Lucy DelRossi
Riverside Community Care

Doctor Taylor Hall
Assistant Professor of Social Work at Bridgewater State University

Doctor Charles Seitz
Doctor of Dental Surgery at Charles M. Seitz private dental practice

CC:

Senate President Karen Spilka
Speaker of the House Ronald Mariano