*[Your Name]*

*[Your Address]*

*[Date]*

Senator James B. Eldridge Representative Claire D. Cronin

Senate Chair House Chair
Joint Committee on the Judiciary Joint Committee on the Judiciary

24 Beacon St. 24 Beacon St.

Room 320 Room 136

Boston, MA, 02133 Boston, MA, 02133

Re: S. 913 *An Act to ensure right to counsel in eviction proceedings*

 H. 3456 *An Act to ensure right to counsel in eviction proceedings*

 H.1537 *An Act establishing a right to counsel in certain eviction cases*

 Dear Chairman Eldridge and Chairwoman Cronin
 and Members of the Joint Committee on the Judiciary:

 I am writing to support legislation on the right to counsel in eviction cases (H. 3456, H. 1537, S. 913).

In 2018, over 92% of tenants who faced eviction went to court without a lawyer, while the majority of landlords were represented by counsel.

Many tenants do not know their rights or how to protect themselves both before court and in court. Legal help and access to the right resources at the right time can prevent families from homelessness, prevent illegal or unnecessary evictions, prevent displacement, and create a path to housing stability.

I support the Right to Counsel (RTC) Coalition’s recommendation drawing together provisions from all the RTC bills currently before the State Legislature to create a “hybrid” RTC bill that also builds upon lessons learned by advocates in Massachusetts and from other places that are starting to implement RTC. I support this proposal because it focuses on creating a continuum of legal assistance and housing stability, it acknowledges that different stages call for different levels of legal involvement. Eviction cases move fast and can be intimidating, a right to counsel would help prevent unbalanced and unfair results while also working toward housing stability.

I strongly believe it is time to level the playing field in eviction cases. Please issue a favorable report on the right to counsel in eviction cases.

Thank you,

*[Your name]*