

## Co-Sponsor Amendment #1137

### Access to counsel program = housing stability

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With eviction cases climbing above pre-COVID levels, Massachusetts needs a strong, comprehensive plan to make sure people remain stably housed.

We are grateful that the House Ways & Means budget proposes to reinstate and make critical Chapter 257 eviction prevention measures permanent, but these protections alone are not enough.

**Amendment #1137 to H3900: Access to Counsel Program** would create a statewide program for low-income tenants and low-income owner occupant landlords in eviction proceedings. It is an essential part of a comprehensive response to prevent evictions and create a path to stable housing.

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- 9 out of 10 tenants facing eviction in Massachusetts are unrepresented. They are summoned to court to a complicated process where consequences could be that they lose their home.
  - Only 11.5% of tenants are represented in Housing Court, while 86% of landlords are represented. Landlord attorneys pressure unrepresented tenants into signing agreements that are often unsustainable.
  - By the age of 15, more than 1 in 4 children living below the federal poverty line experience eviction. Evictions lead to decreased engagement in school and an increased risk of dropping out.
  - Evictions can be devastating. They cause depression and illness, spiral into job loss, send people into shelters, and are uprooting entire neighborhoods.
  - In addition to putting a strain on families, evictions put a strain on municipalities, the healthcare system, and the state's shelter system.

“When your family gets an eviction notice it is probably one of the scariest moments, especially when you have young children to think about. Without an attorney, I don’t think our family would have been able to keep our home.” A tenant from a 3-generational family that faced eviction and was represented by MetroWest Legal Services.

**Co-sponsor Amendment #1137** which provides language to establish an Access to Counsel Program and funding of \$7 million to phase it in.

# 240 Organizations Calling for a Statewide Access to Counsel Program

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Abundant Housing MA  
Action for Boston Community Development  
Action, Inc.  
Advocacy Network to End Family Homelessness  
AIDS Action/Fenway Health  
Alliance of Cambridge Tenants  
Allston/Brighton Community Development Corporation  
Allston Brighton Health Collaborative  
American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts  
Amherst Family Health Center  
Amherst Municipal Affordable Housing Trust  
Amherst Town Council (Resolution)  
Arise for Social Justice  
Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence  
Bassuk Center  
Beacon Communities  
Beacon Residential Management  
Berkshire County Regional Housing Authority  
BEST Hospitality Training  
Beth Israel Lahey Health  
Black Economic Justice Institute  
Black Teachers Matter  
Boston Area Rape Crisis Center  
Boston Bar Association  
Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program  
Boston Housing Authority  
Boston Medical Center  
Boston Public Health Commission  
Boston Teachers Union  
Boston Tenant Coalition  
Brockton Neighborhood Health Center  
Brockton Interfaith Community  
Cambridge Health Alliance  
Cambridge Residents Alliance  
Casa Myrna  
Cathedral Church of St. Paul  
Catholic Charities Worcester County  
Center for Human Development  
Central Mass Housing Alliance  
Charter Street Tenant Association  
Chelsea Police Department  
Chelsea Public School Committee  
Chair, Kelly Garcia  
Children Advocacy Center of Suffolk County  
Children's HealthWatch  
Children's Services of Roxbury  
Chinese Progressive Association  
Citizens' Housing and Planning Association  
City Life/Vida Urbana  
City Mission Boston  
City of Boston  
City of Boston Veterans' Services  
City of Boston (Resolution)  
City of Cambridge (Resolution)  
City Northampton (Resolution)  
City of Springfield (Resolution)  
City Manager of Cambridge, Louis A. DePasquale  
Coalition for Social Justice  
Codman Square Neighborhood Development Corporation  
Community Action Agency of Somerville  
Community Action Pioneer Valley  
Community Care Cooperative  
Community Health Network for North Central Mass  
Coalition for a Healthy Greater Worcester  
Cooley Dickinson Health Care, Northampton  
Conference of Boston Teaching Hospitals  
Craig's Doors - A Home Association  
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute  
De Novo Center for Justice and Healing  
Disability Policy Consortium  
DOVE (Domestic Violence Ended)  
East Boston Social Centers  
Easthampton Affordable and Fair Housing Partnership  
Economic Mobility Pathways (EMPath)  
Edward M. Kennedy Community Health Center  
Eliot Community Human Services  
Elizabeth Freeman Center  
Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts  
Fall River Confronting Discrimination Committee  
Fall River Housing Joint Tenant Council  
Family Promise Metrowest  
FamilyAid Boston  
Father Bill's & MainSpring  
Fenway Community Development Corporation  
Food Bank of Western Massachusetts  
Framingham Public Health Department  
Greater Boston Labor Council  
Greater Boston Legal Services  
Greater Lawrence Community Action Council  
Grow A Strong Family  
HarborCOV: Communities Overcoming Violence  
Harvard Legal Aid Bureau  
Heading Home  
Health Care For All  
Health Resources in Action  
Heisler, Feldman & McCormick  
Holland & Knight LLP  
HomeStart  
Homes for Families  
Horizons for Homeless Children  
Housing Families  
Immigrant Service Providers Group/Health  
Inquilinos Boricuas en Accion  
Institute for Community Health  
Inter-Church Council of Greater New Bedford  
Jane Doe, Inc.  
Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action  
Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston  
Jewish Family & Children's Service  
JP Progressives  
Justice Center of Southeast Massachusetts  
La Collaborativa  
La Comunidad  
Latinos Unidos En Massachusetts  
Law Office of Laura M. Unflat  
Lawyers Clearinghouse  
Lawyers for Civil Rights in Boston  
Lawrence Community Works  
League of Women Voters Massachusetts  
Legal Services Center of Harvard Law School  
LEO, Inc.  
Lexington Housing Partnership Board  
LivableStreets  
Local Initiatives Support Corporation - Boston  
Lynn Community Health Center  
Lynn Housing Authority & Neighborhood Development  
Lynn United for Change  
Maloney Properties, Inc.  
Mandela Residents Cooperative Association, Inc.

Mass Alliance of HUD Tenants  
Mass Alliance of Portuguese Speakers  
Mass Appleseed Center for Law and Justice  
Mass Association for Mental Health  
Mass Association of Community Development Corporation  
Mass Association of Community Health Workers  
Mass Bar Association  
Mass Catholic Conference  
Mass Coalition for the Homeless  
Mass Communities Action Network  
Mass Fair Housing Center  
Mass General Brigham  
Mass General Hospital Center for Community Health Improvement  
Mass Housing and Shelter Alliance  
Mass Law Reform Institute  
Mass League of Community Health Centers  
Mass LGBTQ Bar Association  
Mass Political Cooperative  
Mass Public Health Association  
Mass Senior Action Council  
Mass Smart Growth Alliance  
Mass Teachers Association  
Mass Union of Public Housing Tenants  
Mayor Gary Christenson, Malden  
Mayor Katjana Ballantyne, Somerville  
Mayor Carlo DeMaria, Everett  
Mayor Paul Heroux, Attleboro  
Mayor Jared Nicholson, Lynn  
Mayor Joseph M. Petty, Worcester  
Mayor Dan Rivera, Lawrence  
Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui, Cambridge  
Mayor Robert F. Sullivan, Brockton  
Mayor Linda M. Tyer, Pittsfield  
Medical-Legal Partnership|Boston  
Mental Health Legal Advisors Cmt  
Metro Housing|Boston  
Metropolitan Area Planning Council  
Metropolitan Mayors Coalition  
MetroWest Legal Services  
Middlesex Community College  
NAACP New Bedford Branch  
National Association of Social Workers, Mass. Chapter  
National Lawyers Guild, Mass. Chp  
Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America  
NeighborWorks Housing Solutions  
New Bedford Community Health Ctr  
Northampton Human Rights Commission  
Northampton Survival Center  
Northeast Justice Center

NuLawLabs at Northeastern University School of Law  
Nuestra Comunidad Devel Corporation  
One Family  
Open Sky, Worcester  
Our Father's House  
Pioneer Valley Workers Center  
Preservation of Affordable Housing  
Progressive Democrats of Massachusetts  
Progressive Mass  
Project Hope  
Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts  
Public Interest Law Foundation at Boston College Law School  
Regional Housing Network of Massachusetts  
Residents Council for the Senior & Disabled Tenants of Quincy Housing Authority  
Right to the City Boston  
Rosie's Place  
Roxbury Community College  
Samaritans Southcoast  
Senior Residents Council  
ServiceNet  
Solidarity Lowell  
Somerville Dept. of Veterans' Services Director, Ted Louis Jacques  
Somerville Homeless Coalition  
Society of St. Vincent de Paul Boston  
Solidarity Lowell  
South Middlesex Opportunity Council  
Springfield Dementia Friendly Coalition  
Springfield No One Leaves  
Springfield Partners for Community Action, Inc.  
St. Francis House  
Stop Bullying Coalition  
Temple Sinai of Sharon  
Tenant Advocacy Project at Harvard Law School  
The Neighborhood Developers  
The Second Step  
Three Pyramids  
Town Administrator of Brookline, Mel Kleckner  
Town Manager of Amherst, Paul Bockelman  
Town Manager of Arlington, Sandy Pooler  
Town Manager of Danvers, Steve Bartha  
Town Manager of Randolph, Brian Howard  
Town Manager of Winthrop,

Austin Faison  
Trinity Financial  
Urban Edge  
UNITE HERE Local 26  
United Food and Commercial Union Local 1445  
United Way of Massachusetts Bay and Merrimack Valley  
University of Massachusetts School of Law - Dartmouth  
Veterans Legal Services  
Volunteers of America  
Way Finders  
Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness  
WATCH Community Development Corporation  
WinnCompanies  
Womanshelter/ Compañeras  
Women's Bar Association  
Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts  
Worcester County Food Bank  
Y2Y Network  
YWCA Cambridge  
123 Up And Adam, Inc.