

# Prevent Evictions During COVID

## Co-Sponsor *Amendment #82*

*to H.4879, An Act Enabling partnerships for growth*

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**A statewide right to counsel pilot is part of an essential response to the eviction tidal wave expected when the moratorium lifts**

**Over 90%**

of tenants face eviction without legal representation, while 78% of landlords have legal representation.

**It's time to change this disparity.**

The Governor has extended the eviction moratorium to October 17 providing needed temporary relief. But when the moratorium ends, courts will be flooded with evictions.

- Estimates have been that 15,000 – 20,000 new evictions could be filed.
- Frontline non-profits are inundated with calls from tenants unable to pay rent.
- Applications for emergency rental assistance payments are off the charts.
- Families with children & workers of color re especially at risk of housing instability.

### **Comprehensive Response Needed**

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To avert a coming eviction crisis, we need a comprehensive eviction prevention response that includes rental assistance, preventing evictions before court, and legal representation in eviction cases in court to stabilize people's housing. [\*\*Amendment 82: Promoting housing stability and homelessness prevention through a right to counsel pilot program in Massachusetts in response to the COVID-emergency\*\*](#) would protect renters & owner-occupants in areas of the state hardest hit by COVID through:

- A right to counsel pilot that would provide full legal representation in eviction cases to tenants & owner-occupants whose incomes do not exceed 200% of poverty.
- Legal representation would be provided by designated non-profit organizations with expertise in housing law and experience representing low-income people.
- Projects would be established statewide in at least two areas within each of the Housing Court's six divisions, depending on the resources available.
- Pilot locations would be selected based on certain indicators that capture the devastation that COVID-19 has had on renters and lower-income homeowners.
- Given the need for rapid implementation, the pilot would be based in the Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development with clear and quick time frames.
- Funding for the pilot must come from COVID relief and other sources, including private sources, that do not impact state funding for essential frontline civil legal aid, housing stabilization, and affordable housing programs.

# The [Right to Counsel Coalition](#) is broad based coalition

that is urging Governor Baker to invest \$6 million from federal Coronavirus Relief Funds to for a right to counsel pilot to provide representation to approximately 4,800 households. Our Mass. U.S. Representatives have sent a [letter](#) to the Governor supporting this request.

- Action
- Action for Boston Community Develop
- Advocacy Network to End Family Homelessness
- AIDS Action/Fenway Health
- Alliance of Cambridge Tenants
- Allston/Brighton Community Develop Corp
- Amherst Municipal Affordable Housing Trust
- Amherst Town Council (Resolution)
- Arise for Social Justice
- Beacon Communities
- Beacon Residential Management
- Berkshire County Regional Housing Authority
- BEST Hospitality Training
- Black Economic Justice Institute
- Boston Area Rape Crisis Center
- Boston Bar Association
- Boston Housing Authority
- Boston Tenant Coalition
- Brockton Interfaith Community
- Cambridge Health Alliance
- Casa Myrna
- Cathedral Church of St. Paul
- Catholic Charities Worcester County
- Charter Street Tenant Association
- Chelsea Collaborative
- Chelsea City Manager, Tom G. Ambrosino
- Chelsea Police Department
- Center for Human Development
- 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 Cambridge (City Council Resolution)
- City of Lynn, Mayor Thomas McGee
- City Northampton (City Council Resolution)
- City of Springfield (City Council Resolution)
- Codman Square Neighborhood Develop Corp
- Community Action Agency of Somerville
- Community Action Pioneer Valley
- Community Health Network North Central MA
- Craig's Doors - A Home Association
- De Novo Center for Justice and Healing
- DOVE (Domestic Violence Ended)
- East Boston Social Centers
- Easthampton Affordable & Fair Hsing Partn
- Eliot Community Human Services
- Elizabeth Freeman Center
- Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts
- Fall River Housing Joint Tenant Council
- 123 Up And Adam, Inc.
- FamilyAid Boston
- Father Bill's & MainSpring
- Fenway Community Develop Corp
- Food Bank of Western Massachusetts
- Greater Boston Labor Council
- Greater Boston Legal Services
- Greater Lawrence Com Action Council
- Grow A Strong Family
- HarborCOV
- Harvard Legal Aid Bureau
- Heading Home
- Heisler, Feldman & McCormick
- Holland & Knight LLP
- HomeStart
- Homes for Families
- Housing Families
- Inquilinos Boricuas en Accion
- Immigrant Service Providers Group/Health
- Jane Doe, Inc.
- Jewish Alliance for Law & Social Action
- Jewish Com Relations Coun Grt Boston
- Jewish Family & Children's Service
- JP Progressives
- Justice Center of Southeast Mass
- La Comunidad
- Latinos Unidos En Massachusetts
- Law Office of Laura M. Unflat
- Lawyers Clearinghouse
- Lawyers for Civil Rights in Boston
- Lawrence Community Works
- Legal Services Ctr of Harvard Law Sch
- Lexington Housing Partnership Board
- LivableStreets
- Local Initiatives Support Corp – Boston
- Lynn Housing Authority
- Lynn United for Change
- Maloney Properties, Inc.
- Mass Alliance of HUD Tenants
- Mass Appleseed Cr for Law & Justice
- Mass Assoc of Cmty Develop Corp
- Mass Assoc of Cmty Health Workers
- Mass Communities Action Network
- Mass Fair Housing Center
- Mass Senior Action Council
- Mass Coalition for the Homeless
- Mass General Hospital Center for Community Health Improvement
- Mass Housing and Shelter Alliance
- Mass Law Reform Institute
- Mass Alliance of Portuguese Speakers
- Mass Public Health Association
- Mass Smart Growth Alliance
- Mass Teachers Association
- Mass Union of Public Housing Tenants
- Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone, Somerville
- Medical-Legal Partnership | Boston
- Metro Housing | Boston
- Metropolitan Area Planning Council
- Metropolitan Mayors Coalition
- MetroWest Legal Services
- National Assoc of Social Workers, Mass
- National Lawyers Guild, Mass. Chapter
- Neighborhood Assist Corp of America
- NeighborWorks Housing Solutions
- Northampton Survival Center
- Northeast Justice Center
- NuLawLabs at Northeastern Law Sch
- Nuestra Comunidad Develop Corp
- One Family
- Our Father's House
- Progressive Democrats of Mass
- Project Hope
- Randolph Town Manager Howard
- Regional Housing Network of Mass
- Residents Council Quincy Hsing Auth
- Right to the City Boston
- Rosie's Place
- Senior Residents Council
- ServiceNet
- Solidarity Lowell
- Somerville Homeless Coalition
- Society of St. Vincent de Paul Boston
- South Middlesex Opportunity Council
- Springfield Dementia Friendly Coalition
- Springfield No One Leaves
- Springfield Partners for Cmty Action
- St. Francis House
- Stop Bullying Coalition
- Temple Sinai of Sharon
- Tenant Advocacy Project
- The Neighborhood Developers
- Three Pyramids
- Trinity Financial
- Urban Edge
- UNITE HERE Local 26
- United Food & Commercial Local 1445
- United Way of Mass Bay
- Way Finders
- Western MA Network to End Homelessness
- WATCH Cmty Development Corp
- WinnCompanies
- Womanshelter/ Compañeras
- Women's Fund of Western Mass
- Worcester County Food Bank
- Y2Y Network