

[your letterhead]

Date

Honorable Michael J. Rodrigues
Senate Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means

Honorable Aaron Michlewitz
House Chair
Joint Committee on Ways and Means

Honorable Daniel Hunt
House Chair
House Committee on Federal Stimulus and Census Oversight

In Support of American Rescue Plan Act Funding to Support An Act promoting housing stability and homelessness prevention in Massachusetts
S. 874 (Sen. Sal DiDomenico), H. 1436 (Rep. David Rogers and Rep. Michael Day)

On behalf of [your organization], we urge members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means and House Committee on Federal Stimulus and Census Oversight to **prioritize American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to invest in the right to counsel with three years of funding in the amount of \$78 million (\$26 million/year).**

Recently, Connecticut passed a statewide right to counsel program for eviction cases and allocated \$20 million from ARPA funding over the next two years to launch their right to counsel program off the ground while they find a permanent source of funding. On August 27, 2021, the U.S. Departments of Treasury, Justice, and HUD issued a joint letter urging states to allocate ARPA funds for right to counsel and eviction diversion initiatives.

Under S. 874 and H. 1436, tenants and owner occupants whose incomes are below 80% of Area Median Income would be eligible for representation, and the Right to Counsel Program would be administered by the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation or MLAC.

[your additions - why having a lawyer makes a difference]

We urge your Committees to make an investment, as other states have done, and allocate ARPA funds to launch a strong right to counsel that makes sense for our Commonwealth.

Thank you,