

[your letterhead]

Date

Honorable John Keenan  
Senate Chair  
Joint Committee on Housing

Honorable James Arciero  
House Chair  
Joint Committee on Housing

**Re: Testimony in Support of *An Act promoting housing stability and homelessness prevention in Massachusetts*, S. 874 (Sen. DiDomenico), H. 1436 (Rep. Dave Rogers and Rep. Michael Day)**

On behalf of [your organization], we join with the Right to Counsel Coalition made up of over 200 diverse organizations including property owners, racial justice groups, municipal leaders, and public health members, to urge members of the Housing Committee to report **S. 874 (Sen. DiDomenico) and H. 1436 (Rep. Rogers and Rep. Day)**, *An Act promoting housing stability and homelessness prevention in Massachusetts*, out favorably.

S. 874 and H. 1436 would provide for access to legal representation for low income and vulnerable **tenants** and **owner occupants** of 1-3 family homes, which is their sole dwelling, in eviction cases.

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

The difference legal help can make is clear but a more comprehensive strategy on housing stability is urgently needed. Under a **temporary** expanded legal assistance project in Massachusetts, 90% of cases that received legal representation were successful with the tenancy being preserved or the tenant having additional time to move out. We should not lose the gains that have been made through this project.

Recently, Connecticut passed a statewide right to counsel program for eviction cases and allocated \$20 million from American Rescue Plan funding over the next two years to launch their right to counsel program off the ground while they find a permanent source of funding. Washington state and Maryland likewise passed a right to counsel program in their states. On August 27, 2021, the U.S. Departments of Treasury, Justice, and Housing issued a joint letter supporting right to counsel as an eviction diversion initiative.

Massachusetts should not be left behind. We urge your Committee to report S. 874 and H. 1436 out favorably.

Thank you,