

Immigrant Service Providers Group/Health Somerville, Massachusetts

September 22, 2023

Senate Chair, Senator Lydia Edwards
Joint Committee on the Housing

House Chair, Representative James Arciero
Joint Committee on the Housing

In Support of S. 864, An Act promoting access to counsel
and housing stability in Massachusetts

I whole heartedly join with the Massachusetts Access to Counsel Coalition, a broad-based coalition of over 240 organizations, to urge the Housing Committee to report favorably S. 864, An Act promoting access to counsel and housing stability in Massachusetts. S. 864 would establish a statewide Access to Counsel Program for income eligible low-income tenants and landlord owner-occupants in eviction proceedings.

Providing vulnerable people with access to legal representation in the eviction process needs to be part of a comprehensive housing solution to keep people stably housed.

Evictions are putting a strain on our municipalities, the healthcare system, and the state's shelter system. Additional and costly burdens are placed on the families at risk themselves

For families facing eviction, legal representation is a lifeline. It is frightening to receive an eviction notice and daunting to represent yourself in court, especially where the other side has a lawyer and you do not.

Four states and 17 cities across the country have passed programs to provide tenants with representation in eviction proceedings. It's time for Massachusetts to do the same.

We hope that the Housing Committee will act early in the 2023-24 session to report S. 864 out favorably.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



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