



November 21, 2024

The Honorable Maura Healey  
Governor of Massachusetts  
State House Room 360  
Boston, MA 02133

RE: Ensure that Access to Counsel Program in Evictions Is Permanent and Stable and Include \$5 Million in Proposed FY26 House 1 Budget (Line Item 0321-1800)

Dear Governor Healey,

Thank you for including a dedicated line item for \$3.5 Million for an Access to Counsel program in your proposed FY25 budget that resulted in \$2.5 million to start a pilot program in the final FY25 budget.

As one of the 240 members of the Access to Counsel Coalition, the League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (LWVMA) is committed to continuing the campaign to ensure that this is a permanent and sustainable program as we start the work. Access to Counsel is about full representation, not limited assistance. It is critical to set Access to Counsel up for success and to set a framework for a stable and sustainable program in motion.

Your original FY25 line item was to start a permanent Access to Counsel program, subject to appropriation. We urge you to propose a permanent program with a full 12 months of funding at \$5 million in the FY26 budget so that legal services can sustain the capacity that it is building now.

“My hope is that families do not lose their homes like I did. I hope that together we can build a statewide Access to Counsel Program in a steady way that will make it strong,” said Renee Spencer, LWV Wellesley member, during the Access to Counsel pilot program celebration at La Colaborativa’s Survival Center on October 10. Renee faced eviction unrepresented and spent two years moving from couch to couch.

LWVMA, representing more than 3,000 members in 45 local Leagues across 155 municipalities from Cape Cod to the Berkshires, urges you to make the Access to Counsel program permanent and include \$5 million in FY26 House 1 Budget (Line Item 0321-1800).

Thank you again for your support and belief that a statewide Access to Counsel program is part of a comprehensive approach to providing housing for all. We look forward to working with your administration to ensure success.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marie Gauthier".

Marie Gauthier  
Co-President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Courtney Rau Rogers".

Courtney Rau Rogers  
Co-President