

To: Maura.Healey@mass.gov
Subject: Access to Counsel

November 21, 2024

Governor, we need to assure legal service programs that when they commit to full representation they will have the staff resources to continue to commitment. It is critical to set Access to Counsel up for success and to set in motion a framework for a permanent, stable, and sustainable program. We urge you to return to that vision, remove the word "pilot" from the line item and propose a full 12- month of funding at 5 million so that legal services can sustain the capacity that it is building.

Governor Healey, this is extremely a matter that hits close to home for me.

I was evicted from my public housing home years ago. I went to court without representation and it was one of the worst times in my life. I was evicted, with nowhere to go. I am back in public housing as a tenant leader advocating for public housing residents and Access to Counsel is my number one priority. I have been on several zooms and to the State House with my voice on this, it is so crucial for Access to Counsel becomes a permanent program. It is heart wrenching to think about families going to court without representation, and being put into their cars, or living in a tent.

Thank you, Governor, for your consideration on this extremely important matter.

Renee Spencer