

Promoting Housing Stability

**Tuesday July 16, 2019 at 1 - 5 pm in Room A-1
Judiciary Committee Hearing**

Support Right to Counsel Bills

S. 913, H. 3456, and H.1537

- In 2018, only 7.6% of Massachusetts tenants had lawyers in evictions cases while 70% of landlords were represented by counsel. This creates an unbalanced process.
 - Most eviction cases happen very quickly and many tenants do not know their rights or how to protect themselves both before court and in court.
 - One eviction notice can quickly multiply into a series of losses that leaves people reeling. Eviction causes depression and illness, spirals into job loss, sends people into shelters, uproots kids from their schools, and disrupts peoples' support systems.
 - Legal help and access to the right resources before a court eviction can prevent families from homelessness, prevent illegal or unnecessary evictions, prevent displacement, and create a path to housing stability.
- ➔ **Support a Right to Counsel in evictions that brings together the best features from all of the right to counsel bills.**
- We need to build upon the lessons that Massachusetts housing advocates have learned about how to stop evictions early in the process.
 - We need to create a continuum of legal assistance and access to housing stability resources that acknowledges that different stages call for different levels of assistance.

Imbalance of Representation in Eviction Cases in Massachusetts

