

The Network Endorses Governor Patrick's Education and Transportation Investments, Tax Proposal

The Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness committed to support Governor Patrick's plan for renewed investment in education and transportation, and to support the revenue raising plan that is necessary to make these investments possible. The investments outlined in Governor Patrick's plan align with the Network's priorities to increase access to quality early education and public transportation, two of the most frequently identified barriers to ending homelessness and sustaining permanent housing.

On education: Governor Patrick laid out a plan, totaling \$550 million in its first year and increasing to nearly \$1 billion annually over the next four years, that would provide universal access to high quality early education for children across the state, from birth through age five; fully fund K-12 education and allow for extended school days in high-need schools; make college more affordable and accessible for high school graduates; and allow community colleges to expand their efforts to provide students with the knowledge and skill training needed to succeed in the workplace.

On transportation: The plan calls for an additional investment in our transportation assets of \$5.2 billion over ten years, including \$3.8 billion to invest in existing transit services. Starting in Fiscal Year 2015, \$100 million will be used to expand regional transit authority service by adding hours of operation, increasing frequency on existing routes and adding new service.

In order to pay for these investments, the Governor has proposed a tax plan that calls for the creation of a more fair and comprehensive tax system that lowers the sales tax to 4.5% and raises the income tax to 6.25%. To make the income tax increase fair to all according to their ability to pay, the Governor's proposal includes doubling the personal exemptions for every taxpayer and eliminating a number of itemized deductions, making the tax code both simpler and fairer.

The Network's Leadership Council, comprised of faith, business, education, housing and other local leaders, agreed that this combination of proposals best meets the needs of the people it serves and the goals it aims to achieve. Greater investment in education and transportation is the path to expanding workforce participation, and additional revenue is the only way to make such investment possible. The Governor's proposals recognize this reality and seek to make it possible. The Network is pleased to offer its support for this bold vision and will continue to raise awareness around its critical importance to the Commonwealth's overall economic and social health.

We hope you will join us.