



THE GENERAL COURT OF MASSACHUSETTS
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053

March 25, 2020

The Honorable Charles Baker
State House, Rm 360
Boston, MA 02133

Secretary MaryLou Sudders
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
1 Ashburton Place, 11th Floor
Boston, MA 02108

Dear Governor Baker and Madam Secretary,

We write to **channel the urgency** that members spoke of on the Legislature's call with you yesterday, March 24, regarding **the systemic response necessary to address the needs and rights of people who are currently without homes.**

You know well that for this population, the public health recommendation to "stay at home" is not possible, nor will it be possible for an entire shelter population to self-quarantine once a guest is discovered to be COVID-19 positive or for that individual to self-isolate.

As you also know very well, this is a very vulnerable community and the sector responsible for serving this community is tireless, though entirely under resourced. We want to underscore that our municipalities are *also* not capable of adding one more acute need to their long list of concerns.

Respectfully, we join together to urge the Commonwealth to immediately identify and dedicate the resources for expanded or alternative shelter structures (by county) that reduce density for this population to address its needs holistically.

We are grateful for your commitment to this population and we urge you to act quickly on our shared goals:

- Direct local emergency response personnel to consider this effort as part of the Emergency Order.
- Identify and assess the necessary infrastructure (e.g. hotel rooms, motel rooms, college and boarding school dormitories, etc.) and/or produce new construction that may be needed (for e.g. outdoor heated tents in parking lots, on fields, in stadiums) to support our efforts.
- Enlist all available resources such as the National Guard which potentially can assist with logistics and implementation and necessary human service staff to augment the efforts of a largely volunteer and untrained workforce.

As you closed yesterday's call, you noted that we have "boots on the ground" in our communities. That is true. **We can assure you that the chaos and distress that is mounting around homeless shelters in community after community cannot be sustained.** Our response must conform with public health practices, recommendations, knowledge and approaches. **The Commonwealth must do better.**

We must protect the health of guests in shelters across the Commonwealth as well as their surrounding communities. The state can and should step in with all due speed.

Yours in service,

Mindy Domb, State Representative
3rd Hampshire District

Tricia Farley-Bouvier, State Representative
3rd Berkshire District

Christine Barber, State Representative
34th Middlesex District

Natalie Blais, State Representative
1st Franklin

Pete Capano, State Representative
11th Essex District

Dan Carey, State Representative
2nd Hampshire

Gerard Cassidy, State Representative
9th Plymouth District

Tackey Chan, State Representative
2nd Norfolk District

Michelle Ciccolo, State Representative
15th Middlesex District

Jo Comerford, State Senator
Hampshire, Franklin, Worcester District

Mike Connolly, State Representative
26th Middlesex District

Claire Cronin, State Representative
11th Plymouth District

Diana DiZoglio, State Senator
1st Essex District

Jamie Eldridge, State Senator
Middlesex and Worcester District

Nika Elugardo, State Representative
15th Suffolk District

Dylan Fernandes, State Representative
Barnstable, Dukes, and Nantucket District

Sean Garballey, State Representative
23rd Middlesex District

Anne Gobi, State Senator
Worcester, Hampden, Hampshire, Middlesex

Carlos Gonzalez, State Representative
10th Hampden District

Tami Gouveia, State Representative
14th Middlesex District

Richard Haggerty, State Representative
30th Middlesex District

James Hawkins, State Representative
2nd Bristol District

Stephen Hay, State Representative
3rd Worcester District

Natalie Higgins, State Representative
4th Worcester District

Adam Hinds, State Senator
Berkshire, Hampshire, Franklin & Hampden District

Kevin Honan, State Representative
17th Suffolk District

Mary Keefe, State Representative
15th Worcester District

Kay Khan, State Representative
11th Middlesex District

Kathleen LaNatra, State Representative
12th Plymouth District

Eric Lesser, State Senator
1st Hampden & Hampshire District

Jack Lewis, State Representative
7th Middlesex District

Joan Lovely, State Senator
2nd Essex District

Adrian Madaro, State Representative
1st Suffolk District

Paul Mark, State Representative
2nd Berkshire District

Joan Meschino, State Representative
3rd Plymouth District

Christina Minicucci, State Representative
14th Essex District

Liz Miranda, State Representative
5th Suffolk District

Rady Mom, State Representative
18th Middlesex District

Michael Moore, State Senator
2nd Worcester District

Tram Nguyen, State Representative
18th Essex District

Patrick O'Connor, State Senator
Plymouth & Norfolk District

Smitty Pignatelli, State Representative
4th Berkshire District

Denise Provost, State Representative
27th Middlesex District

Angelo Puppolo, State Representative
12th Hampden District

David Robertson, State Representative
19th Middlesex District

Maria Robinson, State Representative
6th Middlesex District

Lindsay Sabadosa, State Representative
1st Hampshire District

Jon Santiago, State Representative
9th Suffolk District

Alan Silvia, State Representative
7th Bristol District

Thomas Stanley, State Representative
9th Middlesex District

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Jose Tosado, State Representative
9th Hampden District

Paul Tucker, State Representative
7th Essex District

Steven Ultrino, State Representative
33rd Middlesex District

Andy Vargas, State Representative
3rd Essex District

Aaron Vega, State Representative
5th Hampden District

Susannah Whipps, State Representative
2nd Franklin District

John Velis, State Representative
4th Hampden District

cc: House Speaker, Robert DeLeo
Senate President, Karen Spilka