



August 3, 2021

Senator James B. Eldridge, Chair  
and Senator Eric P. Lesser, Vice Chair  
Joint Committee on the Judiciary  
State House, Room 320

Representative Michael Day, Chair  
Representative Chynah Tyler, Vice-Chair  
Joint Committee on the Judiciary  
State House, Room 136

**Re: S. 921 (Sen. Joseph Boncore), The HOMES Act**

Dear Chair Eldridge, Vice-Chair Lesser and Chair Day and Vice-Chair Tyler:

I am pleased to submit this testimony on behalf of the Western MA Network to End Homelessness in support of the HOMES Act (S.921).

The Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness (“Network”), which includes hundreds of partners from every sector across the region, supports collaborative solutions across Hampden, Hampshire, Franklin and Berkshire Counties to prevent and end homelessness through a Housing First approach that centers racial equity.

**The Network has identified the HOMES Act (S.921) as a top priority to prevent homelessness and to make re-housing possible, an especially urgent need during this pandemic.**

Even before the pandemic, families and individuals experiencing homelessness across our region were frequently denied housing due to the mere fact that they were party to an eviction when they did nothing wrong or were not evicted. This barrier created prolonged shelter stays, increased instability and additional trauma for children and adults alike.

Now, as the CDC eviction moratorium ends and hundreds of households in Western Massachusetts alone face the imminent threat of eviction due to the pandemic, we must act quickly to ensure our most vulnerable residents, disproportionately people of color, do not bear this additional burden of an eviction record for life. **This bill’s passage is a critical component to addressing the racial inequity in homelessness in Western Massachusetts and across the Commonwealth.**

We urge you to issue a favorable report on the HOMES Act.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best,

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