

Champ Godbolt's Remarks

10th Annual Gathering of the Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness – May 29, 2026

My name is “Champ” Godbolt Jr., I live at 65-69 Pendleton Ave, in Springfield in my family home that Fannie Mae now owns after a foreclosure. This home has been in my family for the last 70 years. My mother and father grew up in the Jim Crow era South. My father, Wilford Godbolt Sr., dropped out of school in the 4th grade and worked as a share cropper with my grandparents. My father then moved to Springfield and bought this property, my childhood home, and the only place I have ever called home.

I grew up going to Springfield Technical High School. I then received a full basketball scholarship to Holy Cross. After I graduated I spent over a decade playing professional basketball overseas. I then returned to my community in Springfield as a Basketball Coach and advocate for youth sports. I am currently the Head Varsity Basketball Coach at Wilbraham & Monson Academy. Being able to coach youth basketball has allowed me to share my skills, knowledge and experience with hundreds of young people.

My mother fell ill after my father's passing, during which time we got behind on our payments and defaulted on the mortgage. My mother was working with a lawyer who failed to file the necessary bankruptcy paperwork or counsel us on next steps. She passed away in 2023. Fannie Mae foreclosed on the property in 2025, and I have continued to live in my family home.

After the default, Fannie Mae hired Guardian Asset Management to check on the property to make sure it was not vacant. Despite repeated calls to tell them that we were living in our home, they changed locks without notice, and cut the pipes so that I have inadequate water pressure and heat to this day. I know I am far from alone in this experience.

And I also know it is only more frequent with the number of foreclosure cases in western Massachusetts up 38% from last year alone.

I'm now working with Springfield No One Leaves to overturn that foreclosure in Housing Court and keep my family home.

This doesn't have to be the story for homeowners like me and my family. Thanks to the leadership of Senator Adam Gomez, there is a bill in the legislature right now that would require foreclosure mediation and if it had passed already, I would not be standing here right now at risk of losing my home. We need to pass this bill to save others from this terrible experience.

We are the only state in New England that doesn't have foreclosure mediation and we are only 1 of 8 states in the entire country that does not require the bank to get a court order to foreclose. It's time to put protections in place to keep families like mine in their homes.

I am grateful for this opportunity to share my experience and offer a clear solution to protecting homeowners. The work we do at Springfield No One Leaves has empowered me to be able to say in a room of hundreds of people, we need Foreclosure Mediation.

I will continue to fight in other ways to have the chance to buy back my home. But our state legislators can act right now for the hundreds of others out there in western MA alone to give them the protection they deserve. Please act now.

Thank you.