



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

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WEDNESDAY: JOINT COMMITTEE ON HOUSING TO HOLD OVERSIGHT HEARING ON HOMELESSNESS IN MASSACHUSETTS

BOSTON—On Wednesday, December 18, the Joint Committee on Housing will hold an oversight hearing to examine the rise in homelessness across Massachusetts. The committee will hear testimony regarding the Department of Housing and Community Development’s new initiatives within the Emergency Assistance program to more efficiently administer Emergency Assistance and wind down the practice of housing families in hotels and motels. The committee will also hear testimony from providers and advocates about innovative solutions to reduce family homelessness in the Commonwealth and from families, who are currently living in shelters, about their experiences.

“Since the global fiscal crisis of 2008, it is clear that low-income families and individuals have had to shoulder the brunt of a struggling economy, which has led to the rising homeless population in the Commonwealth,” said Senator Eldridge. “Since then, I have been deeply concerned about how policy and budget decisions have influenced the number of homeless people in Massachusetts. I look forward to better understanding why so many residents are struggling today and how all government, non-profit and private sector stakeholders can work together to reverse the homelessness and housing crises in this state.”

“Hotels and motels are not the best approach to the problem of homeless for families or for taxpayers. As a committee, we are committed to finding a more sustainable solution to provide homeless families with safe and reliable permanent housing,” said Rep. Kevin Honan. “Meeting with all of the stakeholders, including DHCD, experts and homeless families will allow us to formulate a shift in policy going forward which will allow DHCD more flexibility in assisting low-income families in the Emergency Assistance program.”

The oversight hearing will be chaired by Senator Jamie Eldridge and Representative Kevin Honan, co-chairs of the Joint Committee on Housing and members of the Joint Committee on Housing are expected to attend the hearing. The committee will hear testimony by invitation only.

The following individuals will testify:

- Undersecretary Aaron Gornstein, Department of Housing and Community Development
- Chris Norris, Executive Director, Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership
- Peter Gagliardi, Executive Director, HAPHousing
- Altia Taylor
- Sheryi Thompson
- Kelley Cronin, Executive Director, Acton Housing Authority and formerly of Emergency Shelter Commission in Boston
- David Hedison, Executive Director, Chelmsford Housing Authority and CHOICE, Inc.
- Kelley Gossett, Policy Director, One Family
- Rachel Heller, Director of Public Policy, Citizens' Housing and Planning Association
- Ruthie Liberman, Vice President of Public Policy, Crittenton Women's Union
- Libby Hayes, Executive Director, Homes for Families
- Diane Sullivan, Policy Director, Homes for Families
- Kelly Turley, Director of Legislative Advocacy, Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless
- Liza Hirsch, Staff Attorney, Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
- Ruth Bourquin, Staff Attorney, Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
- Steve Valero, Senior Attorney, Greater Boston Legal Services

WHO: Senator Jamie Eldridge, Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Housing
Representative Kevin Honan, House Chair of the Joint Committee on Housing

WHAT: Joint Committee on Housing oversight hearing on homelessness

WHEN: Wednesday, December 18, 2013
10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

WHERE: Massachusetts State House, Hearing Room B-2

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