



MASSACHUSETTS COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS

Committed to ensuring that everyone has a place to call home

November 19, 2013

Welfare Debate Update: Please Call Your State Representative and Senator Today to Help Improve the Legislature's Final Welfare Reform Bill

Support Low-Income Families Participating in the State's Family Cash Assistance Program!

Quick Links

[Coalition's home page](#)

[Letter from Welfare Coalition to bill conferees re: overall bill recommendations](#)

[Letter from MIRA Coalition and partners to bill conferees re: immigrant provisions](#)

[Text and History of House Bill 3737](#)

[Text and History of Senate Bill 1806](#)

Save the Date!

Legislative Action Day/Youth on the Hill Day 2014 will be held in the Great Hall at the State House on Thursday, February 27, 2014.

Dear friend,

Tomorrow, the Legislature will wrap up formal sessions for calendar year 2013. Before doing so, we anticipate that the Legislature will vote on the welfare reform bill, [House Bill 3737](#) and [Senate Bill 1806](#), which are focused on changing the state's Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children Program (TAFDC). The [Coalition and many partner agencies](#) are very concerned that the bills proposed by the Legislature contain many punitive and counter-productive elements that will not help families exit poverty.

Please see the action alert below from our colleagues from the Family Economic Initiative and the [Welfare Coalition's letter to the legislative conferees](#), who are working out the differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill, for more information.

We need your help today, before tomorrow's anticipated vote on the compromise bill, to get more Senators and Representatives to reject the worst elements of the bill and to champion the most helpful parts of the bill, as it is reported out by the conference committee (perhaps later today).

Legislators can be reached through the State House switchboard at 617-722-2000, or you can go [here](#) to search for your State Representative and State Senator based on your address.

Please contact me with any questions or to share feedback from your legislators.

Registration details will be sent out shortly. Please consider organizing a delegation from your agency/community to participate in the day!

Thank you for your swift advocacy! Please stay tuned for additional updates by following the Coalition on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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Please Take Action Today!

Please make calls to your State Senators and Representatives and ask them to urge the Welfare Conference Committee Chairs -- House Ways and Means Chairman Dempsey and Senate Ways and Means Vice-Chairman Flanagan -- to take action on the items listed below. You may either call your state legislators or forward this email to them. To find your state legislators' direct contact information, [follow this link](#).

* **Disability:** Not adopt the House or Senate provisions that would authorize future Dept. of Transitional Assistance Commissioners to eliminate the state standard for disability in the TAFDC program. Benefits for approximately 4500 families are at stake and many more in the future. (S.1806, § 14; H.3736, § 20)

* **Applicant Job Search:** Not adopt job search requirements for applicants for TAFDC, which the House improved, but did not provide child care or transportation. (S.1806, § 9; H.3765, § 16)

* **Learnfare:** Not adopt the Senate provision expanding Learnfare. (The House did not include this provision.) Learnfare has been in place for almost 20 years, yet there is no evidence it improves school attendance or educational attainment but jeopardizes essential benefits to an entire family. (S.1806; § 19)

* **Denial of Benefits for Not Achieving Goals:** Adopt the House provision relating to Economic Independence Goals. The House conveys this as a criterion for 24 month time limit extensions. (S.1806, § 9; H3756, § 16)

* **Noncitizen Housing Bar:** Not adopt the House or Senate provision restricting noncitizens eligibility for state subsidized housing, which targets many legally present immigrants, such as domestic violence survivors, asylum applicants, and Haitian earthquake survivors, as well as many citizen children; and would further increase the Commonwealth's family homelessness crisis. (S.1806, § 27E; H.3756, § 16A)

* **Education and Training:** Adopt the House provisions allowing education and training for TAFDC recipients for up to 24 months. (S.1807, § 17A; H.3756, §§ 16, 24)

* **Teen Living Shelter Program (TLP):** Adopt the Senate provision extending eligibility for TLPs to any stage of pregnancy. The House provision excludes teens under age 16, yet these youngest teens are the most vulnerable. (S.1806, § 27; H. § 26)

* **Funding for Education and Training:** Allocate \$11 million for education and training and supports such as employability assessments and transportation. These activities help recipients prepare for and maintain work.

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Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless



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