Sample letter to the editor re: family homelessness

March 2014

Dear Editor,

I am grateful that the Legislature and Governor have just passed a mid-year funding bill that will provide an additional $45.4 million for the Emergency Assistance (EA) program for families experiencing homelessness. These funds will ensure that the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) will be able to continue to provide the safety net of shelter and basic services from now until the end of June to approximately 4,400 eligible families with children each night.

[Insert a few sentences on your connection to the issue/why you care.]

As we look ahead to the start of the next fiscal year on July 1st, I am joining with the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless in asking [insert names of the local State Representative and Senator*] and the full Legislature to continue to adequately fund the Emergency Assistance program in fiscal year 2015 and to:

- Ensure that families experiencing homelessness no longer have to stay in places not meant for human habitation before accessing EA shelter and services by amending the EA line item and by reinstating the Seven Day Temporary Emergency Accommodations Program for families who are deemed temporarily ineligible for EA

- Provide $87.5 million for the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program to allow more than 2,000 new households (families, unaccompanied youth, and adults) access permanent, affordable housing

- Strengthen the HomeBASE program by providing up to $8,000 for housing expenses so that eligible families can avoid entering shelter or quickly exit shelter

- Increase funding for the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition household assistance program up to $12 million to provide additional families with needed homelessness prevention resources

I urge you to join me in contacting our State Representatives and Senators to help ensure that all of our neighbors have a safe and permanent place to call home. For more information, please visit www.mahomeless.org.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

[Your address]

* To find the names of your elected officials, enter your address at www.wheredoivotema.com