

Sisters of Notre Dame de Namur
St. Julie Billiard Retirement Home
30 Jeffrey's Neck Rd.
Ipswich, MA 01938

TO: Senator Barbara L'Italien, Rep. Danielle Gregoire Co-Chairs of the Joint Committee on Elder Affairs and Members of this Committee

RE: Letter of Support for House Bill 2077/Senate Bill 2039 - An Act Relative to Assisting Elders and People with Disabilities in the Commonwealth

I am writing on behalf of the members of the St. Julie Billiard Retirement Home Community in Ipswich, as one of the 74 Organizational Endorsers of the Massachusetts Coalition for Homeless' Campaign to Strengthen EAEDC Assistance. Our community of 70 Sisters of Notre Dame have unanimously endorsed their support for *An Act Relative to Assisting Elders and People with Disabilities in the Commonwealth*.

Emergency Aid to the Elderly Disabled and Children Program assists over 20,000 people in the Commonwealth, people who are the poorest of the poor and most vulnerable. It has not been updated in 29 years.

Of particular concern is the shelter deduction penalty for EAEDC participants who become homeless and need emergency shelter, whose monthly benefits get reduced from \$303.70/month to \$92.80. Other more fortunate people would be outraged if asked to live with this privation. House Bill 2077/Senate Bill 2039 will eliminate this shelter deduction for individuals experiencing homeless, and allow EAEDC participants to receive their full benefits.

We Religious Sisters who freely choose to live vows of poverty would not be able to adequately meet our basic needs for healthcare, transportation, clothing etc. without funding from our Congregation, as well as state and federal funding, as a certified residential care facility. For this we are grateful. We know that "But for the grace of God there go I."

So, in light of our commitment to stand with people made poor, we ask in solidarity that you move H.2077/S.2039 forward as soon as possible, which will assist thousands of our needy brothers and sisters who receive EAEDC benefits by:

- Removing the shelter/reduction penalty for individuals experiencing homelessness;
- Increasing the EAEDC grant for an individual from \$303.70 to \$428/month;
- Increasing the allowable personal asset from \$250 to \$2500;
- Creating an annual cost of living adjustment for EAEDC participants.

What a difference these changes will make in the quality of life and human dignity of our most vulnerable residents in moving towards strengthening EAEDC assistance. Thank you for taking our request into serious consideration.

Sincerely,

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