



**SUPPORT PASSAGE OF
HOUSE BILL 2077/SENATE BILL 2039
TO STRENGTHEN
EMERGENCY AID TO THE
ELDERLY, DISABLED
AND CHILDREN (EAEDC)**

October 11, 2017

Dear the Honorable Barbara L'Italien, the Honorable Danielle Gregoire and members of Joint Committee on Elder Affairs,

My name is Tina Giarla, Community Organizer at the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless.

Currently, out of the 20,371 EAEDC participants, over 6,000 are in the districts of the members of the Joint Committee on Elder Affairs.

Part of my job as a Community Organizer is to serve as a voice bridging the gap between public policy and the community in hopes of bringing about meaningful changes to peoples' lives, and empowering vulnerable or oppressed populations to share their voices to help shape public policy that affects their lives. Over the years, we have worked closely with EAEDC participants who have been affected by this stagnant and restrictive program and I would like to share with you what strengthening and assisting participants receiving EAEDC benefits truly means.

Removing the homelessness penalty means that Tammy will finally be able to afford to take her medications regularly. She will no longer have to nickel and dime her every day costs such as toilet paper, hygiene products, clothes and food, despite living in a shelter. Increasing the monthly grant and asset limits means that we will finally allow our most vulnerable citizens, like Thomas, to sign a lease, instead of signing another EAEDC application because of the penalty he faced due to exceeding the allowable asset limit of \$250. We cannot expect 20,371 individuals to survive on benefits that remain idle as the cost to survive increases item by item every single day.

EAEDC participants are left without any viable resources to free him/herself from the binds of poverty. This change will not only drastically improve the quality of life of our most vulnerable citizens but it will also help build a stronger foundation beneath the feet of those who are at risk of falling into homelessness and help assist the service providers who are there to catch them, not if, but once they fall.

As Hubert Humphrey once said "...the moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; those who are in the shadows of life; the sick, the needy and the handicapped."

Your support for the Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled, and Children (EAEDC) bill, an Act relative to assisting elders and people with disabilities in the Commonwealth (House Bill 2077/Senate Bill 2039), sets the expectation on how we should be treating our most vulnerable neighbors.

I hope you have heard our voices. Thank you for your time and consideration,

Tina Giarla
Community Organizer