



April 28, 2025

The Honorable [full name]  
State Representative  
General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**Via**

**email:**

[email]

Dear Representative [last name]

We write today to flag critical amendments to the House FY26 Budget Proposal. We appreciate that the House Ways and Means Budget Proposal considered children's and families' services but there are some significant gaps the Commonwealth needs to fill. We need your support to protect children and families. Please prioritize the following:

- **#1216 Ensuring Adequate Human Service Wages (Rep. Finn) (line item 1599-6903)** - allocating \$307M for EOHHS to set rates for community-based human services programs at no less than the 63rd percentile of the Bureau of Labor Statistics salary benchmarks specific to Massachusetts.
- **#882 DCF Support & Stabilization (Rep. Garballey) (line item 4800-0040)** - providing \$139,486,736, so as not to backstep too far on these funds supporting family preservation, reunification, and service coordination.
- **#1250 Residential Treatment for Children and Families (Rep. Decker) (line item 5042-5000)** - supporting intensive residential treatment programs at not less than \$9.8M and clinically intensive residential treatment programs at not less than \$5.5M.
- **#1445 Lift Kids Out of Deep Poverty (Rep. Decker) (line items line item 4403-2000 & 4408-1000)** - raising cash assistance grants by 10% in October 2025 requiring \$498,116,063 for transitional aid to families with dependent children and \$224,290,924 for emergency aid to the elderly, disabled and children. *(We appreciate that the House Ways and Means Committee's (HWM) budget proposal preserves the FY 2025 grant increase, but grant amounts are still far below half the federal poverty level and not enough to meet people's basic needs.)*
- **#256 Boston Area Youth - Cash Assistance for Stable Housing (BAY-CASH) (Rep. Owens) (line item 4000-0007)** - \$100,000 to support a demonstration of the BAY-CASH model providing direct cash assistance and critical services to young adults experiencing or at risk of homelessness.
- **#705 Massachusetts Head Start Association (Rep. Worrell) (line item 3000-5000)** - increases funding to \$20M to support and protect Head Start's early education and comprehensive child and family

supports which provide high-quality programming to over 10,000 vulnerable children and families, including the lowest-income, highest-need children.

- **#1537 Income-Eligible Waitlist (Rep. Mendes) (line item 1596-2411)** - invests \$25M to address the state's childcare financial assistance waitlist which has been frozen for a year and has more than 30,000 children in low-income families who are currently eligible but waiting and unable to access affordable childcare. It would allow approx. 1,500 more children to receive affordable childcare over the next year, up from 900 in the HWM budget.
- **#1221 Housing Services for Unaccompanied Youth Experiencing Homelessness (Rep. O'Day) (line item 4000-0007)** - increase funding by almost \$1.5 million (over FY25-level and FY26 HWM proposal) to \$12 million in FY26 to support youth and young adults under age 25 in every region who are experiencing housing instability and homelessness on their own, without their parent or guardian.
- **#864 Homeless ID (Rep. O'Day)** - add \$75,000 to the Massachusetts Transportation Trust Fund (line item 1595-6368) to provide free standard Mass IDs to eligible people experiencing homelessness. The amendment also would add an outside section to establish fee waiver and documentation standards for youth and adults experiencing homelessness to access standard Mass IDs.

This funding will pay dividends in child well-being and family preservation, preventing neglect, trauma, and abuse and stopping problems upstream before they become more expensive and dangerous. Thank you for your efforts to ensure the Commonwealth's FY26 budget prioritizes children's services across the continuum of care to drive better outcomes for children's health, safety, and wellbeing.

Sincerely,

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