

***Building Blocks Coalition  
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November 16, 2006

Honorable Brian Joyce, Chair.  
Joint Committee on Housing  
State House, Room 416-A  
Boston, MA 02133

Honorable Kevin Honan, Chair.  
Joint Committee on Housing  
State House, Room 38  
Boston, MA 02133

**Re: Request for Public Hearing on Impact of 9C Budget Cuts to Housing**

Dear Chairman Joyce and Chairman Honan:

The budget cuts that Governor Romney made late last week will severely impact families and individuals, particularly those with the lowest incomes. Therefore, the Building Blocks Coalition would like to make three requests.

First, we ask that the Joint Committee on Housing promptly schedule a public hearing to ascertain the impact of the 9C budget cuts made by the governor last week on low income and homeless families and individuals who rely on state-assisted housing programs. For example, at least 500 families will not receive rental assistance, and there are affordable rental homes that will be placed at risk of losing their affordability. We also know that the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) program, whose goal is to prevent homelessness, has had to shut down. This means that 1,000 households (half of whom have already submitted applications likely to be approved) will not receive assistance. And, the SoftSecond Home Mortgage program will not be able to make new loans to first time homebuyers because it has already spent or committed all of the funds that remain after the governor's reductions, and this could result in a loss of money from private banks, not to mention the incredible loss of the dream of homeownership for families across Massachusetts.

Second, we ask that in your capacity as chairmen of the Housing Committee, you will support the legislature returning for a formal session to override the governor's veto of the transfer from the "rainy-day" fund. According to the governor, it is allegedly a lack of funds that has caused the need for the cuts. If the legislature overrides his veto of the funds transfer, that excuse will be off the table, and the opportunity for a successful legal strategy could be strengthened. Alternatively, legislative leaders could determine that recent revenue receipts are sufficient to cover the appropriations that the governor reduced and state so publicly.

Finally, we encourage you to support passage of a supplemental budget, or whatever measure proves to be necessary, once the new administration takes office, which reinstates the vetoed housing and homelessness prevention funds.

The Building Blocks Coalition supports a comprehensive and coordinated approach to ending homelessness and providing affordable housing for Massachusetts residents. The Coalition members are statewide homelessness prevention and affordable housing organizations. We appreciate your ongoing support for affordable housing and preventing homelessness.

Sincerely,

Joe Carleo  
AIDS Housing Corporation

Robyn Frost  
Mass. Coalition for the Homeless

Bill Henning  
Boston Center for Independent Living

Lew Finfer  
Mass. Communities Action Network

Aaron Gornstein  
Citizens' Housing and Planning Association

Joe Finn  
Mass. Housing and Shelter Alliance

Stephanie Brown  
Homes for Families

Allan Rodgers  
Mass. Law Reform Institute

Tom Callahan  
Mass. Affordable Housing Alliance

Maureen Fitzgerald  
Mass. Nonprofit Housing Association

Joe Diamond  
Mass. Association for Community Action

Jack Cooper  
Mass. Union of Public Housing Tenants

Joseph Kriesberg  
Mass. Association of Community  
Development Corporations

Julia Kehoe  
Metropolitan Boston Housing Partnership

Thomas Connelly, Jr.  
Mass. Chapter NAHRO

Harris Gruman  
Neighbor to Neighbor

Matt Noyes  
United Disability Housing Partnership

cc: Members of the House  
Members of the Senate