[Date]

The Honorable John Keenan The Honorable James Arciero

Senate Chair House Chair

Joint Committee on Housing Joint Committee on Housing

**Re: Testimony Supporting Fair Housing Legislation H.1441/S.861 and S.860**

Dear Chair Arciero, Chair Keenan, and Distinguished Members of the Joint Committee on Housing,

I am writing in support of legislation that will strengthen our state’s fair housing laws. I urge the members of the Housing Committee to favorably report out:

* H.1441/S.861, *An Act to affirmatively further fair housing*, and
* S.860, *An Act prohibiting discriminatory effects in housing and community development*, out favorably.

H.1441/S.861 creates a state-level duty to affirmatively further fair housing to make sure that the state, cities, towns, and other public entities do not discriminate in their programs. Affirmatively furthering fair housing means taking a proactive approach to creating diverse, inclusive communities with access to good jobs, schools, health care, transportation, and housing.

S.860 strengthens protections against discrimination for renters, creating a state fair housing disparate impact standard. This will allow people to challenge a housing policy or program that has a discriminatory impact on them because of their race, sex, gender identity, disability, family status, or other protected class — even if the policy or program appears on its face to apply to everyone equally.

[Your personal additions - why protecting our public housing is important for Massachusetts]

By ensuring access and opportunity to housing through more equitable policies, we can reshape the policies that have created and perpetuated segregation for decades. We can create protections for the future and begin to right the wrongs of the past, rooting out both intentional and unintentional discrimination in our housing policies and land use decisions.

Thank you,

[your name]