



CHAPA'S FY2020 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

HOUSING PRODUCTION LEGISLATION (H.1288 & S.775)

SPONSOR(S): **REPs. KEVIN HONAN, ANDY VARGAS, & SEN. JOSEPH BONCORE**

This legislation uses the Governor's Housing Choice bill as a foundation and includes additional provisions to create more housing, reduce barriers to production, and set affordable housing production goals. In addition to enabling cities and towns to adopt certain smart growth zoning best practices related to housing development by a simple majority vote, rather than the current two-thirds supermajority, as contained in the Governor's Housing Choice bill, this legislation includes:

- Multifamily zoning requirement for cities and towns served by public transit
Also filed as a separate bill - **H.1231**, sponsored by Rep. Christine Barber
- Abutter appeals reform to discourage frivolous lawsuits to stop development
Also filed as a separate bill - **H.3397 & S.903**, sponsored by Rep. Joseph McGonagle & Sen. Julian Cyr
- Setting a statewide affordable housing production goal
Also filed as a separate bill - **HD.3784**, sponsored by Rep. Dave Rogers

MRVP REFORMS (H.1305 & S.797)

SPONSOR(S): **REP. ADRIAN MADARO & SEN. JAMIE ELDRIDGE**

Legislation would codify and make programmatic improvements to the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP), including raising the fair market rent standard for rental vouchers, increasing administrative fees, requiring inspections, and improving data collection.

FAIR HOUSING

EXCLUSIONARY ZONING (H.1344 & S.781)

SPONSOR(S): **REP. CHRISTINE BARBER & SEN. SONIA CHANG-DIAZ**

Legislation would prohibit cities and towns from discriminating against a development because it has affordable housing or is suitable for families with children.

ANTI-DISPLACEMENT

- **RIGHT TO COUNSEL** (H.1537, H.3456, & S.913)
SPONSOR(S): **REPs. DAVE ROGERS, CHYNAH TYLER, & SEN. SAL DIDOMENICO**
Legislation would provide low-income tenants facing eviction with a right to an attorney
- **RENTAL ARREARAGE PROGRAM** (H.1264)
SPONSOR(S): **REP. MARJORIE DECKER**
Legislation to re-establish an upstream statewide rental arrearage program to help households avoid homelessness by providing back rental assistance
- **LANDLORD TAX CREDIT** (H.2500 & S.1603)
SPONSOR(S): **REP. KEVIN HONAN, & SEN. JOSEPH BONCORE**
Legislation would give a \$1,500 tax credit to small residential property owners who maintain their rents at or below market rent.

PUBLIC HOUSING REFORMS

- **TENANT BOARD MEMBERS IN TOWNS** (H.1291 & S.777)
SPONSOR(S): **REP. KEVIN HONAN & SEN. JOSEPH BONCORE**
Legislation would create a process for appointing tenant members to housing authority boards in towns.
- **LEVERAGING NEW RESOURCES FOR LHAs** (H.1317 & S.785)
SPONSOR(S): **REP. DAVE ROGERS & SEN. BRENDAN CRIGHTON**
Legislation would provide local housing authorities (LHAs) with additional resources to preserve public housing by allowing housing authorities to borrow against their capital funds and retain the proceeds from the sale of their property.

ON SOLID GROUND: ECONOMIC MOBILITY FOR FAMILIES (H.173 & S.58)

SPONSOR(S): **REP. AARON VEGA & SEN. JASON LEWIS**

Legislation to study economic mobility programs, examine and address the impacts of cliff effects, and call for increased collaboration across state agencies to better serve low-income families.

- Data Transparency and System Coordination
Also filed as a separate bill - **S.31**, sponsored by Sen. Joan Comerford

HOUSING SERVICE COORDINATORS (H.1279)

SPONSOR(S): **REP. KEVIN HONAN**

Legislation creates a Housing Service Coordinators program to assist residents in subsidized housing to help mediate disputes between landlords and tenants and coordinate economic self-sufficiency services.

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION ACT (H.2463 & S.1618)

SPONSOR(S): **REP. ANN-MARGARET FERRANTE & SEN. CYNTHIA CREAM**

Legislation to provide additional funds for the Community Preservation Trust Fund in order to increase the state-match to CPA communities by increasing the deeds recording fee.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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H.1305 & S.797: AN ACT CODIFYING THE MASSACHUSETTS RENTAL VOUCHER PROGRAM

SPONSORS: REP. ADRIAN MADARO & SEN. JAMIE ELDRIDGE

MRVP helps produce and preserve affordable homes throughout the Commonwealth by providing rental assistance to about 8,500 low-income households, including seniors, persons with disabilities, and families with children.

This legislation would codify and make programmatic improvements to the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP), including raising the fair market rent standard for rental vouchers, increasing administrative fees, requiring inspections, and improving data collection.

MRVP is not in statute and is instead subject to uncertainty through the annual budget process, where the program can be amended or removed without going through the normal legislative process. This bill would codify MRVP in the Massachusetts General Laws, allowing for deliberate and thoughtful reform and improvement.

The bill would also make important programmatic changes to increase its effectiveness.

Currently, MRVP vouchers use a rent level set in 2005, increasing the rent burden on many households and making vouchers difficult to use in high-cost markets such as Boston. This bill would increase those payment standards to match present-day fair market rent levels, making vouchers more usable.

The bill also increases the fee to administer vouchers from \$40 to \$80, better aligning the fee with the federal Section 8 program. This will allow administering agencies to perform inspections of apartments rented with MRVP vouchers, ensuring these are safe and healthy homes for their residents.

Lastly, in keeping with best practices in measuring data and outcomes, the bill requires The Department of Housing and Community Development to administer and maintain a voucher management system to better inform future reforms to the program.



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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