

METROPOLITAN MAYORS COALITION

a local initiative facilitated by METROPOLITAN AREA PLANNING COUNCIL

MARTIN J. WALSH
Mayor of Boston

June 21, 2016

JOSEPH C. SULLIVAN
Mayor of Braintree

The Honorable Karen Spilka
State House, Room 212
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Brian Dempsey
State House, Room 243
Boston, MA 02133

MEL KLECKNER
Town Administrator of Brookline

Senator Sal DiDomenico
State House, Room 208
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Stephen Kulik
State House, Room 238
Boston, MA 02133

RICHARD C. ROSSI
City Manager of Cambridge

THOMAS AMBROSINO
City Manager of Chelsea

CARLO DeMARIA, JR.
Mayor of Everett

Senator Viriato deMacedo
State House, Room 313A
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Todd M. Smola
State House, Room 124
Boston, MA 02133

GARY CHRISTENSON
Mayor of Malden

STEPHANIE MUCCINI BURKE
Mayor of Medford

RE: FY17 Budget - Statewide Housing Court

ROBERT J. DOLAN
Mayor of Melrose, Vice-Chair

Dear Members of the FY17 Budget Conference Committee:

SETTI WARREN
Mayor of Newton

As members of the Metropolitan Mayors Coalition, we are writing to urge you to include funding and authorization in the FY2017 budget for the expansion of the Housing Court to communities who presently do not have access to this forum.

THOMAS P. KOCH
Mayor of Quincy

If approved, this would provide our communities with access to a court specializing in housing matters for the first time. Our cities have large stocks of rental housing and our District Courts have very high eviction caseloads. There is a significant need for the expertise in landlord-tenant matters that Housing Courts provide.

BRIAN ARRIGO
Mayor of Revere

JOSEPH A. CURTATONE
Mayor of Somerville, Chair

JAMES M. McKENNA
Town Manager of Wintthrop

Housing specialists are trained to provide services to both landlords and tenants that allow for a fairer court process between the two and often save landlords from costly eviction proceedings while protecting tenants from homelessness. The programs unique to the Housing Court, such as the Tenancy Preservation Program and Lawyer for the Day, not only assist landlords in retaining their tenants and stabilizing tenancies for the very vulnerable, but also afford critical legal services to those unrepresented. Moreover, in preserving tenancies, taxpayers are saved millions of dollars on expensive items like motels, homeless shelters and emergency room visits.

The expertise that resides within Housing Courts also helps municipal officials deal more effectively with health and safety violations. In fact, it allows for the quicker revitalization of dilapidated and abandoned properties which bring housing back into use and in turn, increases tax revenues. This is particularly important in our municipalities which often struggle with an inventory of distressed buildings.

The Governor and the Senate have included both funding and authorization to expand the Housing Court. We ask that you adopt Outside Sections 140-145 in the Senate's FY17 Budget which would authorize the expansion statewide and Line Item 0036-0003 in the Senate's FY17 budget of \$1.2M for the costs associated with the expansion.

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Again, we urge the Conference Committee to make this investment so that all residents in the Commonwealth can have access to the benefits, expertise, and resources that Housing Courts offer. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Joseph Curtatone
Mayor, City of Somerville
Chair, Metro Mayors Coalition

Robert Dolan
Mayor, City of Melrose
Vice-Chair, Metro Mayors Coalition

Martin J. Walsh
Mayor, City of Boston

Gary Christenson
Mayor, City of Malden

Joseph Sullivan
Mayor, Town of Braintree

Stephanie Muccini Burke
Mayor, City of Medford

Melvin Kleckner
Town Administrator, Town of
Brookline

Setti Warren
Mayor, City of Newton

Richard Rossi
City Manager, City of Cambridge

Thomas Koch
Mayor, City of Quincy

Thomas Ambrosino
City Manager, City of Chelsea

Brian Arrigo
Mayor, City of Revere

Carlo DeMaria
Mayor, City of Everett

James McKenna
Town Manager, Town of Winthrop