

October 23, 2023

To Our Massachusetts Congressional Delegation,

We, the undersigned organizations and individuals, represent thousands of people from non-profit, business, public agencies, municipalities, and philanthropic organizations across Massachusetts. We write to you as our state welcomes an increasing number of migrant and refugee individuals and families. As you know, the situation has prompted a number of urgent needs from expedited work authorizations to safe housing so that our new neighbors can achieve a sense of stability, the ability to provide for themselves and their families, and the opportunity to contribute to their new home communities. We thank you for all that you are currently doing to make sure that the federal government is supportive in addressing these needs, and we ask your assistance in making sure Massachusetts receives the aid it needs to treat our newcomers with dignity and respect.

More than 90 municipalities are hosting more than 7,080 families in our shelter system, including pregnant people and young children. Nearly half of these families are new arrivals. They are living in emergency shelters, and more than 3,300 families are currently residing in hotels and motels. The Healey Administration has declared a state of emergency in order to address these families' urgent needs in as immediate and comprehensive a manner as possible. However, there are supportive measures that require federal assistance, and we urge you to take all necessary action.

We support you in your efforts thus far to bring more resources to the state. Further, in the most immediate term, we urge you to pay particular attention to three critical measures on which we seek federally supportive action:

- **Expedited work authorizations:** Many recent arrivals are eligible for work authorizations, but permission to work has faced bureaucratic delays. These delays have forced recent arrivals to rely more heavily on social safety nets. Addressing these delays will empower more work-eligible newcomers to become more self-sufficient sooner, reducing reliance on public resources.
- **Congregate shelter sites:** Although Massachusetts has been adding shelter and motel units regularly, extraordinary measures are needed to keep up with demand as necessitated by the number of arrivals. The state needs our federal partners to take immediate action on this front. Specifically, identifying federal properties that can be used as congregate shelter sites could greatly assist in state efforts to keep recent arrivals housed.
- **Federal funding for additional needs:** The influx of new arrivals has generated a broad swath of needs, especially with the number of children and pregnant people. In addition to immediate emergency needs like housing and food, there are a variety of supports required from healthcare and education to concrete items like diapers, baby formula, and clothing. Funding and related resources are desperately needed to stave off what could become an ever-spiraling crisis.

Massachusetts has always been a welcoming haven for those in need. We must ensure that our Commonwealth continues to live up to our highest ideals amid this current situation. Thank you for the work you've done thus far to help meet the urgent needs of migrant families, and for the work that lies ahead.

Sincerely,

Working Group to Protect Migrant Families, Coordinating Committee:

Peggy Shukur, Deputy Director, Anti-Defamation League
Dr. Geralde Gabeau, Executive Director, IFSI-USA
Carlot Ducasse Celestin, Mental Health Counselor, IFSI-USA
Lawrence Bailis, Board Chair, Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action (JALSA)
Cindy Rowe, President & CEO, Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action (JALSA)
Jeremy Burton, Chief Executive Officer, Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston
Lino Covarrubias, CEO, Jewish Family Service of Metrowest
Kelly Turley, Associate Director, Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless
Marc Draisen, Executive Director, Metropolitan Area Planning Council
Dieufort J. Fleurissant, True Alliance Center Inc.

Co-Signers:

Paul Bockelman, Town Manager, Town of Amherst
William Reichelt, Mayor, Town of West Springfield
Nicole LaChapelle, Mayor, City of Easthampton
Gina-Louise Sciarra, Mayor, City of Northampton
Mayor Katjana Ballantyne, Mayor, City of Somerville
Rachel H. Monarrez, Superintendent of Schools, Worcester Public Schools
Cliff Chuang, Superintendent, Bedford Public Schools
Dan Brosgol, Bedford School Committee
Katherine Wong, Youth and Young Adult Homeless Project Manager, City of Springfield Office of Housing
Jessica Tang, President, Boston Teachers Union
Kathy Brown, Executive Director, Boston Tenant Coalition
Greg Reibman, President & CEO, Charles River Regional Chamber
Stephanie Sullivan, CEO, Boston Health Care for the Homeless Program
Alison LeBlanc, Executive Director, Child Health Equity Center
Kathryn Buckley-Brawner, Executive Director, Catholic Charities Agency
Lisa Guisbond, Executive Director, Citizens for Public Schools
Kate-Marie Roycroft, CEO, The Alliance of Massachusetts YMCAs
Keith A. Mahoney, Vice President for Communications and Public Affairs, The Boston Foundation
Leah Bradley, Chief Executive Officer, Central Massachusetts Housing Alliance, Inc.
David Gibbs, Executive Director, Community Action Agency of Somerville, Inc.
Andrew Morehouse, Executive Director, Food Bank of Western Massachusetts
Isabel M. Pérez, Executive Director, Framingham Community Connections
Jeff Thielman, President & Chief Executive Officer, International Institute of New England
Michael Sroczynski, Senior Vice President, Government Advocacy and General Counsel, Massachusetts Health & Hospital Association
Rabbi James Greene, Chief Executive Officer, Jewish Family Service of Western Massachusetts
Jessica Andors, Executive Director, Lawrence CommunityWorks
Leran Minc, Assistant Director of Policy, Project Bread-The Walk for Hunger
Kerry A. Costello, President, League of Women Voters of Boston
Suzanne Brock, Legislative Chair, League of Women Voters of Cape Cod
Amy Cooper, Immigration Specialist, LWVMA Legislative Action Committee, League of Women Voters of Massachusetts
Mary Utt, Co-President, League of Women Voters of the Cape Cod Area
Kimberly Foley, League of Women Voters of Winchester
Tanya Neslusan, Executive Director, Mass Equality
Maria Rios, Director of Equity and Community Health Policy, Mass General Brigham

Anna Krieger, Executive Director, Massachusetts Advocates for Children
Chelsea Sedani, Advocacy Director, Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center (MassBudget)
Michelle Haimowitz, Executive Director, Massachusetts Head Start Association
Georgia D. Katsoulomitis, Executive Director, Massachusetts Law Reform Institute
Jillian Harvey, President, Mystic Valley Area NAACP
Tamara Small, CEO, NAIOP Massachusetts, The Commercial Real Estate Development Association
Vick Mohanka, Acting Chapter Director, Sierra Club Massachusetts
Christi Staples, Vice President, Policy and Government Relations, United Way of Massachusetts Bay
Pamela Schwartz, Director, Western Massachusetts Network to End Homelessness
Alexis Breiteneicher, Executive Director, Valley Community Development
Mukesh Baral, Co-Founder, Advocacy for Refugee and Immigrant Services for Empowerment (ARISE)
Regina Engel, Finance and Operations Director, African Community Education
Beth Kontos, President, American Federation of Teachers Massachusetts
Kevin Noonan, President, Amherst Shelter Inc. — El Colibrí
Douglas J. Barth, volunteer, Amnesty International
Flor Cabrera, Amnesty International Group 15
Miguel F. Cabrera, Amnesty International Group 15
Eneida Roman, President & CEO, Amplify LatinX
Catherine Russo, Organizer, Art for the Border
Aimee Mitchell, Chief Community Services Officer, Ascentria Community Services
Carline Desire, Executive Director, Association of Haitian Women, Inc.
Melissa Santiago, Community Relations Rep, Behavioral Health Helpline
Christina Vallery, Boston Children's Hospital
Sarah Hadge, Social Worker, Boston Children's Hospital
Karen Losi, LCSW, Social Worker, Boston Children's Hospital
Kirby Tang, LICSW, Boston Children's Hospital
Kim Goldstein, Social Worker, Boston Children's Hospital
Meghan Sullivan, Clinical Social Worker, Boston Children's Hospital
Steven Coletti, LICSW, Clinical Social Worker, Boston Children's Hospital
Danielle Sandage, Clinical Social Worker Manager, Boston Children's Hospital
Kristen MacGlashing, Clinical Social Worker, Boston Children's Hospital
Colleen Huysman, Clinical Social Worker, Boston Children's Hospital
Eileen Roberta, LICSW, Boston Children's Hospital
Devin Wolfe, MSW, LCSW, Clinical Social Worker, Boston Children's Hospital
Roberta Falke, Boston Immigrant Justice Accompaniment Network
Kathleen McTigue, Boston Immigration Justice Accompaniment Network
Kevan L Hartshorn MD, Professor of Medicine, Boston University School of Medicine
Heloisa Galvão, Executive Director, Brazilian Women's Group
Lenita Reason, Executive Director, Brazilian Worker Center Inc
Dr. Thomas Taaffe, Executive Director, Brick House Community Resource Center
Patricia O'Connor, Leader, Brookfields Fight Fear
Eric von Bleicken, Founder, Brookfields Fight Fear
Susan Bowser, Building a Bigger Table
Rachel Plummer, Associate Director, Cambridge Economic Opportunity Committee (CEOC)
Betsy Smith, Coordinating Committee, Cape Cod Coalition for Safe Communities
L. Michael Hager, Cape Cod Coalition for Safe Communities
Carolyn Solomon, Cape Cod Safe Communities
Marjean A. Perhot, Vice President, Refugee and Immigrant Services, Catholic Charities of Boston
Kevin Whalen, Co-Director, CSIO, Center to Support Immigrant Organizing/Equity Now & Beyond
Kenneth J. Laferriere, Treasurer, Charlton Democratic Town Committee

Maisy Talbot, Social Work Intern, Children's Hospital
Rev. Christophor Gilbert, Pastor, Christ Lutheran Church, Natick
Karla Wood, Church of the Pilgrimage
Norah Wylie, Jewish Vocational Services, Committee Member/Volunteer
Karen Frederick, Chief Executive Officer, Community Teamwork
Patricia McMullin, Executive Director, Conference of Boston Teaching Hospitals
Roberta Unger, Congregation Beth El, Sudbury
Janet Buchwald, Congregation Beth El, Sudbury
Toba Spitzer, Rabbi, Congregation Dorshei Tzedek
Tim Foley, 1199SEIU
Maurice Boisvert, Consultant
Tim McCarthy, Executive Director, Craig's Doors - A Home Association
Hugh Silk MD MPH, Vice Chair of Community Health, Department of Family Medicine and Community Health, UMass Chan Medical School
Dan Sontag, Department of Mental Health
Ann Lentini, Executive Director, Domus Incorporated
Charlene Marlborough, Former Chair, Dudley Democratic Town Committee
Seana R. Gaherin, Owner, Dunn Gaherins Inc.
Jo Ann Borinski, Master Teacher, Edward Street
Heather Gonzalez, Chair of Love and Justice in Action Team, Edwards Church
Margaret Harrison, Edwards Church
Ronda Yeomans, Member/Volunteer, Edwards Church UCC
Rev. Heather Prince Doss, Pastor, Eliot Presbyterian Church
Claudia Green, Executive Director, English for New Bostonians
Hannah Hafter, Lead Organizer, Episcopal City Mission
Rabbi Margie Klein Ronkin, Executive Director, Essex County Community Organization
Oscar Guana Osorio, Operations Manager, Essex County Community Organization
Julieth Cabral, Latin Community Organizer, Essex County Community Organization
Elias Lieberman, Rabbi, Falmouth Jewish Congregation
Chyree Heirs-Alexandre, Director of Operations, Family Health Center of Worcester
Chanclaire Dennis, CHW Worker, Family Health Center.
John Yazwinski, President & CEO, Father Bill's & MainSpring
Rev. Annie L. Belmer, Pastor, First Baptist Church of Fitchburg
Rev. Cynthia Worthington-Berry, Pastor, First Church Congregational Natick
Sarah Marino, Office Manager, First Congregational Church in Winchester
Sarallyn Keller, Director of Spiritual Vitality, First Congregational Church of Natick
Cynthia Williams, Director of Spiritual Exploration, First Parish Church of Groton
Mary Ellen Jeffery, First Parish Church of Kingston UU Church
Rev. Emily Bruce, Minister, First Parish Church, Kingston
Kathleen Bean, First Parish Concord (MA) Immigration Justice Task Force
Jessica Bethoney, First Parish Immigration Justice Task Force
Rev. Liz Weber, Minister for Congregational Care, First Parish in Concord
Rev Arthur Lavoie, Minister, First Parish in Plymouth, Unitarian Universalist
Brigitte Conlon, Volunteer, First Unitarian Church of Worcester
Rev. Jeffrey Conlon, Volunteer, First Unitarian Church of Worcester
Robert Persons, First Unitarian Universalist Society in Newton
Judi Rae Fonsh, Advisory Board member, Franklin Site Board DMH
Jay Spencer, French Press Bakery & Cafe
Trish Appert, Executive Director, Friendly House
Rev. Liz Georgakopoulos, Pastor, Grace Church Federated

Ralph E. Hicks, Ed. D., Grassroots Central Mass
Regina Edmonds, Member - Leadership Team, Grassroots Central Mass
Alisa Klein, Executive Director, Grow Food Northampton
Hayley Wood, Director, Hadley Senior Center
Rose M Boursiquot, Director, Haitian Community: Love in action
Rabbi Robin Sparr, Rabbi, HaMakom is The Place
Rev. Katie Cole, Pastor, Hartford Street Presbyterian Church
Steven Ridini, President & CEO, Health Resources in Action
Rabbi Karen Landy, Senior Chaplain, Hebrew Senior Live
Stacy Robinson, Volunteer Advisor, Holyoke/Chicopee Site Advisory Board to MA DMH
Susan Worgaftik, Coordinator, Housing Greenfield
Vanessa Calderon-Rosado, Ph.D., Chief Executive Officer, IBA-Inquilinos Boricuas en Accion
Helena DaSilva Hughes, President, Immigrants' Assistance Center, Inc.
Abigail Buhle, Volunteer, Immigration Justice Task Force, First Parish, Concord
Karen Nothe-Valley, Member-at-large, Indivisible
Patricia Stockwell, Member-at-large, Indivisible
Peter McConarty, Member-at-large, Indivisible
Kevin Moulton, Member-at-large, Indivisible
Jill Leukhardt, Member-at-large, Indivisible
Rachel Horak, Member-at-large, Indivisible
Jeanne Duffy, Member-at-large, Indivisible
Mary Sacksteder, Member-at-large, Indivisible
Frances Langille, Member-at-large, Indivisible
Amy Clarke, Interfaith Council Housing Assistance Committee
Sara Benjamin, Program Director, JRI Health Law Institute, JRI Health
Mary Memmott, Justice and Love in Action Team, Edwards Church, UCC, Framingham
Jane Matlaw, Board Member, JVS
Kelly Tessitore, VP of Policy & Advancement, JVS Boston
Nancy Coan, Director, Lowell Alliance
Laura Martinez, Health Equity Consultant (Owner), Mart Consulting, LLC
Ashleigh Melayne Miller, Community Relations Representative III, Massachusetts Behavioral Health Partnership
Jeb Mays, Executive Committee, Massachusetts Interfaith Worker Justice
Al Vega, Chief of Strategy and Engagement, Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health (MassCOSH)
Katy Z. Allen, Rabbi, Ma'yan Tikvah
Rose-Darla Pascal, Rapid Response Community Liaison, Mayor's Office For Immigrant Advancement
Olivia Bernstein, Senior Clinical Director, Mental Health Association
Michelle McGrath, Founding President, Michelle McGrath PR
Karen Boujoukos, Chairperson, MLK Action Team
Marie Chantal Dickey, Owner, Multi Business Services
Kate Schadinger, Network for Social Justice
Liora Norwich, Executive Director, Network for Social Justice
Joan Horgan, Social Justice Committee, New Roads Catholic Community
Joel Wallen, Associate Executive Director, Pernet Family Health Service
The Reverend John F. Hudson, Pastor, Pilgrim United Church of Christ
Linda Herbst Harding, Librarian, Plymouth North High School
Constance Melahoures, President, Plymouth Taskforce to End Homelessness
Jeanne Krieger, Progressive Democrats of MA (PDM)
Jeanne Kempthorne, Sustaining member, Progressive Democrats of Massachusetts

Jonathan Cohn, Policy Director, Progressive Massachusetts
Jan Soma, Steering Committee, Progressive Needham
Jessica Collins, Executive Director, Public Health Institute of Western Massachusetts
Mary Helen Lorenz, Chair, Racial Justice Advocates, First Parish Lincoln
Mariam Gas, Executive Director, Refugee & Immigrant Assistance Center
Meg Gallo, Program Director, Refugee & Immigrant Assistance Center, Worcester
Jacob Bombard, Executive Director, Rian Immigrant Center
Martine Jn Louis, RISE
Wanda Torres, Assistant Program Director, River Valley Counseling Center
Jennifer J Yanco, Member, Safe Medford
Madeline Leue, Housing Navigator, Salasin Project
Carl Offner, Chair, Sanctuary Committee of Congregation Beth El, Sudbury
David Jaffe, Founder, Sharon Interfaith Action
Priya Rathnam, Shrewsbury Public Library
Jennifer Rifkin, LICSW, Clinical Director, Shrewsbury Youth and Family Services
Cate Goetschius, Clinical Intern, Shrewsbury Youth and Family Services
Abigail Sproles, Intern, Shrewsbury Youth and Family Services
Esther Konadu, Shrewsbury Youth and Family Services, Inc.
Rabbi Jeremy Master, Sinai Temple, Sinai Temple
Peggy Comfrey, CSJ, Justice Promoter, Sisters of St. Joseph of Boston
Marissa L Dupont, Coordinating Committee Member, Solidarity Lowell
Karen Quinones, Special Options Coordinator, Southeastern Mass Opportunity Council
Emilia Rodriguez, Program Manager, Springfield Family Resource Center
Yaneth Garcia, Family Support Worker, Springfield Family Resource Center - Gandara Center
Matthew Stewart, Rector, St. James's Episcopal Church
Rev. Becky Binns, Rector, St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Beth Brady, Outreach Committee Chair, St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Miriam Stein, Stein Consulting
Titus DosRemedios, Deputy Director, Strategies for Children
Cantor David Wolff, Cantor, Temple Beth Am Framingham
Judy Schechtman, Temple Beth Zion
Thomas Alpert, Rabbi, Temple Etz Chaim
Rabbi Raysh Weiss, PhD, Co-Senior Rabbi, Temple Israel of Natick
Rev. William C. Konicki, The Catholic Community of Sacred Heart Hopedale, MA
Helina Almonte, The Center to Support Immigrant Organizing
Joyce Ashley, Member, The Church of the Pilgrimage
Adam Tierney-Eliot, Pastor, The Eliot Church, Natick
Thomas OBrien, Chief Executive Officer, The HYM Investment Group, LLC
Sarah Bayer, Director of Resource & Support Services, The Rian Immigrant Center
Reverend Julie-Ann Silberman-Bunn, Assistant Minister, The Unitarian Universalist Society of Greater Springfield
Matthew Hudson, Medical Student, UMass Chan Medical School
Maxwell Stukalin, Medical Student, UMass Chan Medical School
Liza Neal, Reverend, United Church of Christ
Paula Rayman, Professor Emerita, University of Massachusetts Lowell
Bishop Nicolas Homicil, Executive Director, Voice of the Gospel Tabernacle Church and Tabernacle Multi Service Center Inc
Sarah Hamburg, Watertown Refugee Support Group
Irene Bocella, Watertown Refugee Support Group
Anni Zhu, Way Finders

Layane Diniz, Administrative Assistant, Wayside
Norman M Thibeault, Announcer / Copy Editor, WBUR Radio
Amy Ebbeson, Worcester Addresses Childhood Trauma
Kirsten Frazier, Multilingual Teacher, Worcester Public Schools
Allison Negron-Campbell, Social Emotional Learning Coach, Worcester Public Schools
Deborah Bunker, LICSW, Clinician, YOU, Inc. Worcester Family Resource Center
Rev. Myozen Joan Amaral, Founder, Zen Center North Shore
Immigration and Sanctuary Group of Follen Church
Committee of Interns and Residents/SEIU
Rabbi Randy Kafka
Cantor Vera Broekhuysen
Rev. John J. Oliveira
Rabbi Bruce Bromberg Seltzer
Rev. Alecia Reeves Freeman
Rabbi Becky Silverstein
The Rev. Thomas N. Synan
Rabbi Raysh Weiss
Rabbi Ken Richmond
Maggie Sullivan, FNP-BC, DrPH, FAAN
Nicole Lamontagne, MSW, LICSW
Ruth Abrams
Christopher Allen
Bogdan Anton
Valerie Bailey
Ari Barbanell
Mary Ann Barton
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Tina Marie Kempner
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Xóchi Kountz
Patricia Kryzak
Rachel Lamont
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Arthur MacEwan
Kara McLaughlin
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Dove Morissette
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Aura Obando
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Kaihla Olivar
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Maureen Pollock
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Rwick Sarkar

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Lisa Noling Snellings
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Bobbie Sproat
Emmy Suhl
Chris Sweetnam
Joan Thompson-Stein
Maria Thomson
Mary Tittmann
Andrea Tomsho-Dexter
Marianne Vesey
Elizabeth Waltman
Amanda Wayne
Stephen L. White
Patricia Williams
Andrea Wizer
Jud Wolberg
Julie Wolf
Gerri Wright
Peter Wulkan

Cc:

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren
The Honorable Edward Markey
The Honorable Richard Neal, MA-1
The Honorable Jim McGovern, MA -2
The Honorable Lori Trahan, MA-3
The Honorable Jake Auchincloss, MA-4
The Honorable Katherine Clark, MA-5
The Honorable Seth Moulton, MA-6
The Honorable Ayanna Pressley, MA-7
The Honorable Stephen Lynch, MA -8
The Honorable Bill Keating, MA -9