



Massachusetts Union of Public Housing Tenants

784 Washington St, Suite 504 Dorchester, MA 02124

June 8, 2023

The Honorable Michael Rodrigues
Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means
State House, Room 212
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Aaron Michlewitz
Chair, House Committee on Ways and Means
State House, Room 243
Boston, MA 02133

Re: **Protect and Maintain Massachusetts Public Housing**

Dear Chair Rodrigues, Chair Michlewitz, and Honorable Conferees:

As residents, the Mass Union leaders know the challenges that our communities face on a daily basis. We hold housing authorities accountable while also working collaboratively to set up good programs and policies. We are deeply concerned about the future of our housing and about the struggles that people in our communities' face. We also know that when public housing is cared for and well maintained and when residents are actively involved, we can make our communities thrive.

We call upon the FY24 Budget Conference Committee to protect the state's 43,000 public housing apartments by making the following needed investments in state public housing:

1. **Increase Public Housing Operating Subsidy to \$107 million (Line Item 7004-9005) as provided in S.2400.** Basic maintenance is not happening and the operating subsidy has been underfunded for decades. In 2005, [A Study of the Appropriate Operating Costs for State-Funded Public Housing in Massachusetts](#), found that the annual operating account should increase to about \$115 million. This study is over 20 years old and adjusted for inflation the need is far greater. We urge the Conference Committee to support \$107 million in Line Item 7004-9005 as provided in S.2400.
2. **Increase funding for Resident Services Coordinators to \$6.5 million (Line Item 7004-4314) as provided in S.2400.** Resident service coordinators help the whole public housing community in many ways. Resident service coordinators find support for people with disabilities, help seniors pay bills, coordinate health clinics and food programs, prevent evictions, and arrange for people to live in their own place as opposed to a nursing home. A 2021 survey indicated that resident service providers preserved 680 tenancies. With a \$1.5 million increase to raise this line item from \$5 million to \$6.5 million, more new resident service coordinators can provide support.

We thank you for your work to make the needed investment in the Commonwealth's public housing to make public housing strong and we look forward to having you come to our communities.

Thank you,

David Underhill, Fall River
Acting President of Mass Union of Public Housing Tenants