



Mass Union of Public Housing Tenants  
784 Washington Street, Suite 504  
Dorchester, MA 02124

November 19, 2025

Honorable Julian Cyr  
Senate Chair  
Joint Committee on Housing

Honorable Richard Haggerty  
House Chair  
Joint Committee on Housing

***In Support of S.968, An Act promoting access to counsel and housing stability in Massachusetts***

The Mass Union of Public Housing Tenants, a grassroots organization run by and for tenants of public housing, respectfully urges the Housing Committee to report favorably S.968, An Act promoting access to counsel and housing stability in Massachusetts.

Mass Union's mission is to represent people who live in state and federal public housing across our Commonwealth. Our entire board is made up of tenants, and is elected by our members, who are Local Tenant Organizations across the state. Our members strongly support the Access to Counsel program, which helps both individual tenants facing eviction and those who might receive a Notice to Quit for inappropriate reasons. This program is a game-changer for our communities, which include some of the most vulnerable people in the state.

Every week, Mass Union receives calls from tenants facing eviction. Some of them are facing eviction as retaliation just because they are trying to make change in their community. Others are facing eviction for non-payment which was miscalculated by the landlord. They go to court unrepresented and are up against housing authorities who have lawyers. Because they fear eviction, they sign agreements that they don't understand and that are unsustainable. The entire process is complex and intimidating, especially because many people in public housing have nowhere else to go. We know from experience that legal representation makes all the difference in the world, and the reports from the program's early years bear this out.

Mass Union joins over 240 organizations in thanking the legislature for including a dedicated line-item for Access to Counsel in recent budgets. Now, we urge the legislature to adopt S.968 in order to provide a framework for this crucial program. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

Sincerely,

Dave Underhill  
President, Mass Union  
Tenant Leader, Fall River

Sarah Byrnes  
Executive Director, Mass Union