



# On Solid Ground 2017–2018 Legislative Agenda

The On Solid Ground Coalition is a cross-sector group of more than 30 organizations committed to a research-based approach to increasing housing stability and economic mobility. This package of legislation will encourage systems change to better coordinate our resources to serve low-income households; help families find housing that is affordable; increase access to necessary support services; and allow us to track our progress as we work to help all families succeed across the Commonwealth.

## On Solid Ground Priority: Systems Change

### **An Act Relative to Interagency Efforts to Reduce and Prevent Homelessness (H.2245/ S.725)**

*Sponsored by Rep. Byron Rushing & Sen. Linda Dorcena Forry*

This legislation creates a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among the Secretaries of Housing and Economic Development, Health and Human Services, Labor and Workforce Development, Education, and Administration and Finance to direct these agencies to work together in coordinating services and resources for low-income households that are facing economic instability and homelessness.

### **An Act Improving Public Health through a Common Application for Core Food, Health and Safety-Net Programs (S.612/H101)**

*Sponsored by Sen. Sal DiDomenico*

This bill will increase access to vital social safety-net programs by creating a common application for these resources. The common application will allow individuals to apply in one place for programs including MassHealth, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), income supports, veterans services benefits, and housing resources.

## On Solid Ground Priority: Housing

### **An Act Financing the Production & Preservation of Housing for Low & Moderate Income Residents (H.675)**

*Sponsored by Rep. Kevin Honan & Sen. Linda Dorcena Forry*

This legislation invests \$1.7 billion in an affordable housing bond bill. This five-year authorization will provide critical funding for the production, preservation, and modernization of public and affordable housing in communities across the Commonwealth. The bill also extends the state Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) and expands the annual authorization by \$5 million for supporting the preservation of affordable housing at risk of being lost due to expiring affordability restrictions.

### **An Act Relative to the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (S719)**

*Sponsored by Sen. Jamie Eldridge*

This bill codifies the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) into the General Laws. Currently, MRVP is only authorized through the annual state budget. Codifying the program will create a more permanent authorization and allow for a more deliberative process through legislation to improve the program as it grows.

## **On Solid Ground Priority: Support Services**

### **An Act Providing Immediate Child Care Assistance to Homeless Families (HD3564 / S257)**

*Sponsored by Rep. Marjorie Decker & Sen. Linda Dorcena Forry*

This legislation will allow families living in homeless shelters to qualify for state-funded child care vouchers, providing children with subsidized early education and parents with a safe environment to leave their children while they pursue employment opportunities. Simply put, it is not feasible to job hunt or go on interviews with a child present; this piece of legislation would provide child care opportunities to homeless parents as they enter shelter, so they can immediately start working to get their families back on a path to success.

### **An Act Relative to the Economic Mobility and Stability Program (HD3369 / S724)**

*Sponsored by Rep. Aaron Vega & Sen. Linda Dorcena Forry*

This legislation brings together stakeholders to study the many self-sufficiency programs that have been created to help households increase their incomes and build assets. This bill creates a commission to study these programs that will help shape an economic mobility and financial stability program. The commission will also examine the impact of cliff effects and determine ways to adjust assistance in response to changes in income.

## **On Solid Ground Priority: Data Tracking**

### **An Act Relative to Interagency Efforts to Reduce and Prevent Homelessness (H.2245 / S.5725)**

*Sponsored by Rep. Byron Rushing & Sen. Linda Dorcena Forry*

This legislation, which promotes systems change by directing state agencies to work together in coordinating services for low-income households, also requires these agencies to track and report on data for these programs. The bill will track our resources for low-income families, including housing and homelessness prevention programs, and will require data collection that will help inform how we can continue to improve these programs.

*For more information, please contact*

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