

January 9, 2023

Her Excellency Maura Healey  
Governor of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
State House, Room 280  
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

Dear Governor Healey:

We, the general counsel for many leading institutions and companies based in, or with significant operations in the Commonwealth, would like to express our gratitude for your dedicated support of legal services throughout your career. Today, we respectfully ask that, as Governor, you include \$49 million for civil legal aid in your FY24 budget through the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation's (MLAC) line item, 0321-1600.


Civil legal aid organizations are an essential part of the Commonwealth's social safety net, helping to preserve the livelihoods, health, and safety of thousands of residents across the state, including our institutions' own employees, customers, and stakeholders. Civil legal aid provides a lifeline to people like Ben, a Boston resident who has asthma and uses a nebulizer. Ben had fallen behind on his gas and electricity payments, and when his service was abruptly terminated, he was terrified that he would soon have a serious health emergency. He reached out to Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS) and an attorney there contacted Project Stay Connected, a partnership with the National Consumer Law Center. Together, the advocates determined that Ben was eligible for serious illness protection. Within an hour of their call to the utility company, Ben's service was restored. We all benefit when residents like Ben are able to quickly get back on their feet and take part in the economic life of the Commonwealth.

Ben is one of nearly 97,000 residents who benefited from legal aid last year across 94% of Massachusetts' cities and towns. Still, the need for civil legal representation and advice remains significant, particularly for cases involving consumer issues, housing, family law, and immigration. Due to limited capacity, legal aid organizations are forced to turn away approximately 47% of eligible people (households earning less than 125% of the federal poverty level—\$34,688 annually for a family of four—qualify for civil legal aid in Massachusetts).

Funding civil legal aid is funding for the Massachusetts economy. In recent years, it is estimated that for every dollar invested in civil legal aid, the Commonwealth receives an approximately 3:1 return on investment in economic benefits. An investment of \$49 million in FY24 will enable civil legal aid organizations to increase the number of residents served, and enable improvement and innovation in the delivery of services. In this uncertain economic environment, with rising inflation and increased operational costs, organizations will be able to improve workforce retention and attract a more diverse workforce that can provide much needed legal aid to diverse communities within the Commonwealth.

As you consider your FY24 budget, we hope that you will include \$49 million for civil legal aid and the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation. Thank you again for your leadership.


Sincerely,

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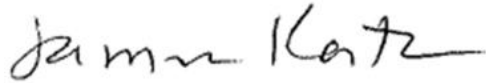
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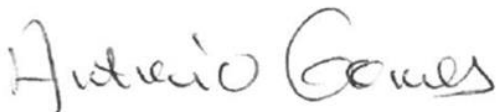
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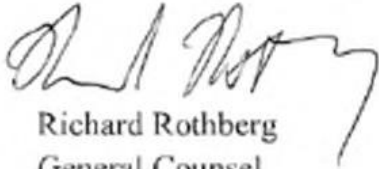
R. Kevin Perkins  
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Chief Legal Officer



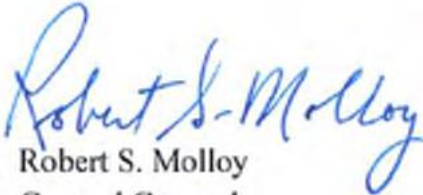
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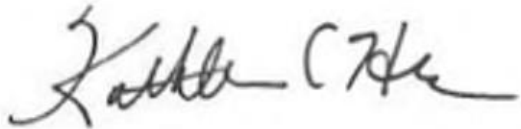
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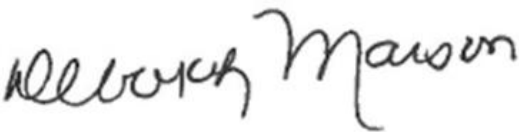
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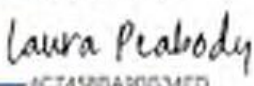




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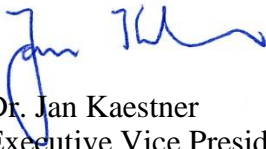


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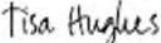
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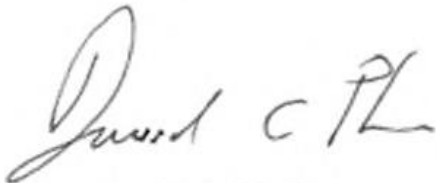
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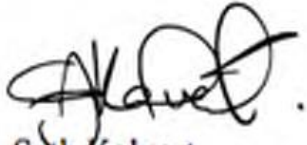
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