

January 31, 2023

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

**RE: Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation (MLAC), Line item 0321-1600**

Dear Governor Healey:

We, a group of deans presiding over some of the Commonwealth's law schools, would like to express our congratulations on your recent inauguration as Governor. We have complete confidence in your ability – as a distinguished alumna of a Massachusetts law school yourself, and a proven leader in the legal community – to guide the Commonwealth from your new position. It is with this confidence that **we write to you in support of the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation's (MLAC's) FY24 budget request of \$49 million (line-item 0321-1600). We urge you to include this full amount in your upcoming budget recommendations.**

Through their classes, clinical experiences, and co-ops, our students appreciate the necessity of civil legal aid. They learn that legal representation increases the likelihood of positive legal outcomes and that, in civil cases, representation is not guaranteed. They understand that legal aid organizations – by providing free legal advice and representation – uphold the Massachusetts Constitution's promise of equal justice for all. As a priority, each of our schools instills in its students the importance of, and knowledge for, providing legal assistance to those in need.

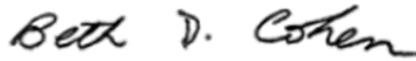
Our law school graduates are eager to lend their expertise to their communities, and many express interest in pursuing careers in civil legal aid. However, without increased state funding, legal aid organizations remain severely understaffed. A larger state appropriation for civil legal aid would help to cultivate the next generation of public interest lawyers in Massachusetts. With additional financial resources, legal aid organizations can offer more competitive salaries and increase their staff diversity, encouraging the best and brightest to join their teams.

Furthermore, the benefits of a highly skilled, diverse legal aid workforce would extend to the state at large: **legal aid providers secured over \$126 million in estimated economic benefits for Massachusetts and its residents.** This includes \$105,259,736 in estimated benefits won for clients, \$141,946 in funds reported as reimbursed to the Commonwealth, and \$21,506,013 in estimated savings obtained for the Commonwealth. In addition to being a justice-oriented decision, a larger state appropriation for civil legal aid is a wise economic decision.

In short, an investment in civil legal aid is an investment in the future of Massachusetts. **Therefore, we respectfully request that you include \$49 million for MLAC in your FY24 budget recommendations.**

Thank you for your dedicated public service and your commitment to justice.

Sincerely,



Beth D. Cohen  
Interim Dean and Professor of Law  
Western New England University School of Law



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Massachusetts School of Law



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Angela Onwuachi-Willig (She/Her/Ella)  
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CC:

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