

October 18, 2023

To Our Massachusetts Congressional Delegation,

We, the undersigned organizations and individuals, represent thousands of people from non-profit, business, and philanthropic organizations across Massachusetts. We write to you as our state welcomes an increasing number of migrant and refugee individuals and families. As you know, the situation has prompted a number of urgent needs from expedited work authorizations to safe housing so that our new neighbors can achieve a sense of stability, the ability to provide for themselves and their families, and the opportunity to contribute to their new home communities. We thank you for all that you are currently doing to make sure that the federal government is supportive in addressing these needs, and ask your assistance in making sure Massachusetts receives the aid it needs to treat our newcomers with dignity and respect.

More than 90 municipalities are hosting more than 6,500 families, including pregnant people and young children. They are living in emergency shelters, and more than 1,800 families are currently residing in hotels and motels. The Healey Administration has declared a state of emergency in order to address these families' urgent needs in as immediate and comprehensive a manner as possible. However, there are supportive measures that require federal assistance, and we urge you to take all necessary action.

We support you in your efforts thus far to bring more resources to the state. Further, in the most immediate term, we urge you to pay particular attention to three critical measures on which we seek federally supportive action:

- **Expedited work authorizations:** Many recent arrivals are eligible for work authorizations, but permission to work has faced bureaucratic delays. These delays have forced recent arrivals to rely more heavily on social safety nets. Addressing these delays will empower more work-eligible newcomers to become more self-sufficient sooner, reducing reliance on public resources.
- **Congregate housing sites:** Although Massachusetts has been adding shelter and motel units regularly, extraordinary measures are needed to keep up with demand as necessitated by the number of arrivals. The state needs our federal partners to take immediate action on this front. Specifically, identifying federal properties that can be used as congregate housing sites could greatly assist in state efforts to keep recent arrivals housed.
- **Federal funding for additional needs:** The influx of new arrivals has generated a broad swath of needs, especially with the number of children and pregnant people. In addition to immediate emergency needs like housing and food, there are a variety of supports required from healthcare and education to concrete items like diapers, baby formula, and clothing. Funding and related resources are desperately needed to stave off what could become an ever-spiraling crisis.

Massachusetts has always been a welcoming haven for those in need. We must ensure that our Commonwealth continues to live up to our highest ideals amid this current situation. Thank you for the work you've done thus far to help meet the urgent needs of migrant families, and for the work that lies ahead.

Sincerely,

Cc:

The Honorable Elizabeth Warren
The Honorable Edward Markey
The Honorable Richard Neal, MA-1
The Honorable Jim McGovern, MA -2
The Honorable Lori Trahan, MA-3
The Honorable Jake Auchincloss, MA-4
The Honorable Katherine Clark, MA-5
The Honorable Seth Moulton, MA-6
The Honorable Ayanna Pressley, MA-7
The Honorable Stephen Lynch, MA -8
The Honorable Bill Keating, MA -9