

March 20, 2014

Massachusetts State House
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Representative:

As Commissions for Persons with Disabilities, charged with representing residents with disabilities, we know that few things are more important than being able to live independently. Living independently with appropriate supports enables people to be full participants in the cultural, economic, and political lives of their communities. However, the dramatic scarcity of affordable housing has led to many unnecessarily living in nursing homes—if not in the streets, as the rate of homelessness among people with disabilities is more than twice that in the general population.

We therefore join with disability rights advocates across the state in urging you to support increased funding for the **Alternative Housing Voucher Program (Line Item 7004-9030)**. The program provides non-senior people with disabilities vouchers that enable them to live in market-rate housing while paying no more than 30% of their income. When it was created in 1995, the program provided 800 vouchers per year, but funding cuts, inflation, and the rising cost of housing has cut that number to just over 400. Advocates are seeking a **\$1.55 million funding increase**, enough to provide about 150 more people the opportunity to live independent lives.

Thank you for your attention to the urgent need for affordable housing for people with disabilities. For more information, please contact Allegra Stout of the Boston Commission for Persons with Disabilities at astout@bostoncil.org or 617-338-6665 or Colin Killick of the Somerville Commission for Persons with Disabilities at colinjkillick@gmail.com or 520-403-3079.

Sincerely,

Boston Commission for Persons with Disabilities
Ruben Roux, Chair

Somerville Commission for Persons with Disabilities
Colin Killick, Chair

Newton Commission on Disabilities
Girard Plante and Rob Caruso, Co-Chairs

Acton Commission on Disabilities
Lisa Franklin, Chair

Cambridge Commission for Persons with Disabilities
Miriam Cooper, Chair