


SEASON OF ADVOCACY TOOL KIT #3




SEASON OF ADVOCACY
from Easter to Pentecost Sunday

This Eastertide, join ECM in advocating for our priority bills, such as a \$20 minimum wage and housing justice measures, aimed at closing the racial wealth gap. Let's work together to move these bills out of committee and onto the House and Senate floors for a vote!

Here are the bills that will be prioritized each week:

- April 8-12: Allow Cities & Towns to Enact Rent Control (S.1299/H.2105)
- April 13-20: A Commission to Study Reparations for MA (S.1055)
- April 21-27: Eviction Records Sealing (H.4356)
- April 28-May 4: \$20/hour Minimum Wage
- May 5 onward: "Affordable Homes Act" Housing Bond Bill

Visit the ECM website
www.episcopalcitymission.org
to access your toolkit for individuals & parishes.



HOUSING OPPORTUNITY AND MOBILITY
THROUGH EVICTION SEALING

THE HOMES ACT (H.4356)



EPISCOPAL CITY MISSION

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Background Information

Eviction records create life-long barriers to housing security, and disproportionately affect tenants of color. In the last 36 years, well over **1 million eviction cases have been filed in Massachusetts**, and their court records are all publicly available online. Currently in MA, tenants are burdened with permanent eviction records even if a landlord filed a case against them that was later resolved, and no eviction occurred. There is currently no process available to either contest or seal a public eviction record. Eviction records don't just affect someone's ability to secure new housing - they can even impact credit and employment. All of this is true even if the tenant wins their case.

The **HOMES Act (H.4356)** would remedy this by enabling eviction records to be sealed after a length of time determined by the circumstances. No-fault evictions would be able to be sealed immediately after the end of eviction proceedings. Evictions for non-payment of rent would be eligible for sealing either 14 days after satisfying an agreement (such as a payment plan) or after four years, provided that the tenant can show it was a result of economic hardship at the time. For an at-fault eviction, a request could be made to seal it after seven years. This law would also allow for housing and credit applicants to answer "no record" if they have an eviction that has already been sealed.

There are ways that H.4356 does not go far enough. For example, rather than requiring tenants to petition the court to have eviction records sealed, we believe that they should be automatically sealed once the tenant has either won or come to an agreement with the landlord such as a payment plan. We are following the lead of grassroots housing advocates and organizers by supporting the bill while also calling for an amendment that would add automatic sealing in certain cases.

You can learn more details at the campaign website, **<https://www.passthehomesact.org/>**.



ACTION TIME

STATUS OF PROPOSED BILL

H. 4356 has been reported out favorably from the Joint Committee on the Judiciary. This is the first bill in our Season of Advocacy that has made it past that stage!

Additionally, Governor Healey's proposed housing bond bill, known as the **Affordable Homes Act (H. 4138)**, includes a weaker version of eviction sealing (Section 47). Since a housing bond bill MUST be passed each legislative session, it is more likely that eviction sealing will pass as part of this larger package. In this case, we'll focus our advocacy efforts on improving the eviction sealing sections of the Affordable Homes Act. **The Pass the HOMES Act campaign site has a detailed fact sheet** for more information.

OUR FOCUS:

Getting our own legislators to support the HOMES act (H.4356) and the Housing Bond Bill (H. 4138) when it comes up for a vote AND ask them to advocate for an amendment that has automatic sealing of dismissals, tenant-won cases, and no-fault evictions.

Ask the Joint Committee on Bonding to substitute the HOMES Act/H.4356 for Section 47 of the Bond Bill/H.4138 with automatic sealing added.

SPECIAL NOTE:

Unlike the other bills we are trying to get out of committee, these do not have an upcoming reporting deadline. Please keep working on these bills through the rest of the legislative season (until June/July).



CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATORS

Action Time!

If you only have 10-15 minutes:

Call your own Representative and Senator, and the Joint Committee on Bonding chairs (in that order of priority)!

If you have a half hour:

Also write a hand-written note, postcard, or e-mail to the entire committee!

If you have a whole hour:

Call the rest of the Joint Committee on Bonding members too!

PHONE CALLS TO YOUR OWN SENATOR & REPRESENTATIVE

Find Your Legislators by entering your home address at:

<https://malegislature.gov/Search/FindMyLegislator> OR google “find my legislator MA” to get to the search page. NEXT, Click on the links to your Senator and Representative to get their numbers. Is your Senator or Representative on the Judiciary Committee? If so, make sure to emphasize that you are a constituent!

SAMPLE CALL SCRIPT FOR YOUR SENATOR/REPRESENTATIVE:

“Hello! My name is **[your first and last name]** and I am a constituent of **[Sen./Rep. NAME]** living at **[your full address]**. I am calling to urge **[her/him]** to support eviction sealing in MA through the HOMES Act (H.4356) and the housing bond bill (H.4138). Please vote in favor of both of these bills, and advocate for an amendment that has automatic eviction sealing of dismissals, tenant-won cases, and no-fault evictions.”

PERSONALIZE with your FAITH, VALUES, or STORY.

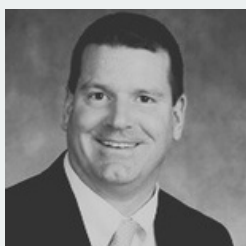
WHO TO CONTACT

PHONE CALLS TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON BONDING:



Edward J. Kennedy, Senate Chair

Office Phone #: (617) 722-1630



Michael J. Finn, House Chair

Office Phone #: (617) 722-2014



Paul W. Mark, Senate Vice-Chair

Office Phone #: (617) 722-1625



John H. Rogers, House Vice Chair

Office Phone #: (617) 722-2450



Members of the Committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures, and State Assets:

Sen. Nick Collins	(617) 722-1150	Rep. Russell Holmes	(617) 722-2220
Sen. Michael Moore	(617) 722-1485	Rep. Rob Consalvo	(617) 722-2030
Sen. Pavel Payano	(617) 722-1604	Rep. Orlando Ramos	(617) 722-2430
Sen. Walter Timilty	(617) 722-1643	Rep. Mike Connolly	(617) 722-2240
Sen. Ryan Fattman	(617) 722-1420	Rep. Rita Mendes	(617) 722-2400
Rep. Carol Doherty	(617) 722-2014	Rep. John Moran	(617) 722-2460
Rep. Nicholas Boldyga	(617) 722-2810	Rep. Normal Orrall	(617) 722-2090
Rep. David Vieira	(617) 722-2230	Rep. James Hawkins	(617) 722-2013

SAMPLE CALL SCRIPT

SAMPLE CALL SCRIPT FOR COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND MEMBERS:

“Hello! My name is **[first and last name]** and I am calling **[committee member name]** to urge **[her/him]** to move the **Affordable Homes Act (H. 4138)** to a full floor vote. It is important to me that all of the funding for public housing and affordable housing do not get cut at all, and I also believe it needs two amendments. The first is to replace the eviction sealing section (Section 47) with the text of the HOMES Act (H.4356) which is stronger. The second is to further improve the eviction sealing section by adding an amendment that has automatic eviction sealing of dismissals, tenant-won cases, and no-fault evictions.”

PERSONALIZE with your FAITH, VALUES, or STORY.



EMAIL CONTACT LIST

Email list of committee members (copy and paste into “to:” box in your email):

edward.kennedy@masenate.gov, Paul.Mark@masenate.gov,
Michael.Finn@mahouse.gov, John.Rogers@mahouse.gov,
Rita.Mendes@mahouse.gov, norman.orrall@mahouse.gov,
David.Vieira@mahouse.gov, john.moran@mahouse.gov,
Nicholas.Boldyga@mahouse.gov, james.hawkins@mahouse.gov,
Mike.Connolly@mahouse.gov, Orlando.Ramos@mahouse.gov,
Rob.Consalvo@mahouse.gov, Russell.Holmes@mahouse.gov,
carol.doherty@mahouse.gov, Nick.Collins@masenate.gov,
Michael.Moore@masenate.gov, Pavel.Payano@masenate.gov,
Walter.Timilty@masenate.gov, Ryan.Fattman@masenate.gov

SEE NEXT PAGE FOR EMAIL/LETTER SAMPLE SCRIPT



LETTER & EMAIL SAMPLE SCRIPT

[Date]

Sen. Edward Kennedy, House Chair & Rep. Michael Finn, Senate Chair
Joint Committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures, and State Assets
24 Beacon Street, Room Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chair Kennedy, Chair Finn, and Committee Members,

I'm **[Your Name]**, a resident of **[Your City/Town]**, advocating for the Affordable Homes Act (H.4138), specifically urging for its advancement to the house floor without reductions in proposed funding.

While appreciating the bill's overall strength, I wish to highlight the need for enhancements in the eviction sealing provision (section 47). Currently, it imposes undue burdens on vulnerable families facing housing insecurity. Lengthy wait periods and a requirement to file sealing requests with the court create obstacles that many families may struggle to overcome, perpetuating housing instability.

To address this, I urge the Joint Committee on Bonding to consider the following amendments to H.4138:

1. Automatic sealing of eviction records in cases dismissed, won by the tenant, or involving no-fault evictions.
2. Adoption of the stronger eviction sealing language from the HOMES Act (H.4356) in place of Section 47.

These changes align with the eviction sealing's purpose to facilitate housing access and alleviate administrative burdens on the court.

[Personalize with your values, stories, or faith here.]

Thank you for your dedication to the Commonwealth's well-being.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

LITURGICAL RESOURCE

Daily Devotion Prayer For Noon Day

Psalm 133

1 Oh, how good and pleasant it is, *
When people live together in unity!

2 It is like fine oil upon the head *
that runs down upon the beard,

3 Upon the beard of Aaron, *
and runs down upon the collar of his robe.

4 It is like the dew of Hermon *
that falls upon the hills of Zion.

5 For there the Lord has ordained the blessing: *
life for evermore.

A Reading

Isaiah 61:1-3 (Can also be read substituting “us” for “me” in unison...

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me;
he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim liberty to the captives and release to the prisoners, to proclaim the year of
the Lord’s favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, to
provide for those who mourn in Zion— to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of
gladness instead of mourning,
the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit.

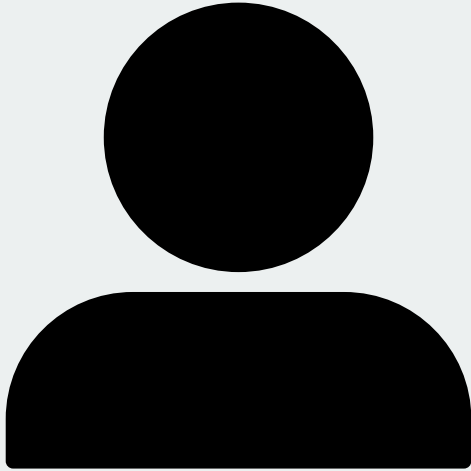
The Collect

Almighty God, who created us in your image: Grant us grace fearlessly to contend
against evil and to make no peace with oppression; and, that we may reverently use our
freedom, help us to employ it in the maintenance of justice in our communities and
among the nations, to the glory of your holy
Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and forever. Amen.



EPISCOPAL CITY MISSION

CONTACT INFORMATION



01 Season of Advocacy Lead Organizer

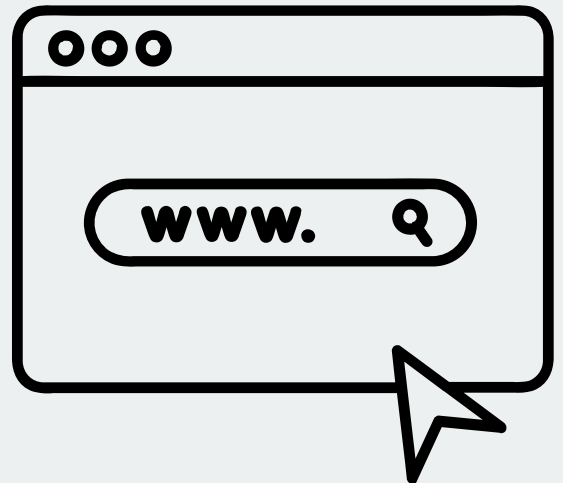
Hannah Hafter

hannah@ecmteam.us

Website

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02



03 Address

Episcopal City Mission

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Boston, MA 02111

