

A RESOLUTION RELATIVE TO COVID-19 HOUSING EQUITY

- WHEREAS,** The COVID-19 pandemic has left tens of thousands of Massachusetts residents in a health, economic, and housing crisis; and
- WHEREAS,** The CDC moratorium and the CARES Act ended on July 31st, which will leave tens of thousands of COVID-affected individuals vulnerable to homelessness; and
- WHEREAS,** Over [16,000](#) new eviction cases have already been filed since October and 3,000 executions have been issued to landlords, meaning these families can be forcibly removed from their homes by sheriffs or constables; and
- WHEREAS,** The economic crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a disproportionate effect on communities of color and low income individuals across Massachusetts; and
- WHEREAS,** Preventing displacement is in the interest of public health, racial justice, equity, and fairness; and
- WHEREAS,** The MA legislature [extended](#) Chapter 257 of the Acts of 2020 to provide some safeguards against eviction to tenants during the COVID-19 recovery period, though these protections do not go far enough in keeping tenants housed; and
- WHEREAS,** Congress established the Emergency Rental Assistance Program (ERAP) to keep families in their homes during the COVID-19 crisis and then the recovery period through two separate [programs](#) (ERA1 and ERA 2); and
- WHEREAS,** ERA1 [provides](#) up to \$25 billion in federal funding under the Consolidated Appropriations Act and ERA2 provides up to \$21.55 billion in federal funding under the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021; and
- WHEREAS,** Only 40 million of 800 million in rental assistance funds have reached eligible tenants across the Commonwealth; and
- WHEREAS,** Available emergency rental assistance funds are not reaching tenants in time to prevent unnecessary evictions despite the availability of unprecedented amounts of federal rental assistance money; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 90% of rental assistance applications are denied according to data from the Eviction Diversion Initiative; and

WHEREAS, Stabilizing housing is necessary for a strong and equitable recovery that prioritizes remedying inequities that have been laid bare by the COVID-19 pandemic; and

WHEREAS, Strong legislative action is required to prevent unnecessary evictions, foreclosures, displacement, and to ensure a more timely and equitable distribution of rental assistance funds;

WHEREAS, An Act to Prevent COVID-19 Evictions and Foreclosures and Promote an Equitable Housing Recovery would protect public health, support tenants, homeowners, and small-scale landlords alike; and

WHEREAS, An Act to Prevent COVID-19 Evictions and Foreclosures and Promote an Equitable Housing Recovery has garnered support from housing, community, labor, and faith groups across the Commonwealth; and

WHEREAS, An Act to Prevent COVID-19 Evictions and Foreclosures and Promote an Equitable Housing Recovery counts 68 Representatives and Senators as sponsors or co-sponsors; **NOW THEREFORE**

BE IT RESOLVED: That the Mayor and City Council of the City of Somerville go on record in support of *S.891 and H.1434, An Act to Prevent COVID-19 Evictions and Foreclosures and Promote an Equitable Housing Recovery.*

Filed in _____