



Housing First for Hampden,
Hampshire, Franklin and
Berkshire Counties

July 17, 2015

The Honorable Senator William Brownsberger, Senate Chair
The Honorable Representative Paul Brodeur, House Chair
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senator Brownsberger and Representative Brodeur:

I am writing to follow-up our presentation to the Commission to Reduce Sex Offender Recidivism of May 28, 2015, regarding the public safety impact of homelessness due to sex offender status. At that meeting, we shared both the experience and recommendations of the Western MA Network to End Homelessness. Senator Brownsberger asked the Network for specific guidance around Commission action steps. We are pleased to provide more detailed recommendations below:

- First and foremost: reform the leveling system to reflect evidence-based practices. This reform is critical to provide a meaningful basis for any housing prohibitions to follow.
- In conjunction with this reform, establish an advisory committee that would evaluate implementation of best practices and their outcomes.
- Require SORB to produce data on leveling and create a feedback mechanism within the legislature (via the advisory committee) to review the correlation of level with risk and outcomes.
- Adopt state law or regulation that requires housing authorities and other state-funded housing providers to consider housing sex offenders on a case-by-case basis, relying on evidence-based indicators.
- Fund pilot projects that provide housing and support services for Level 3 sex offenders.
- Issue directives to state agencies (e.g., MA Department of Public Health, MA Department of Housing and Community Development) to explicitly incorporate in their policy language that, pursuant to evidence-based practices, public safety is best served by appropriately housing people with sex offense histories.
- Amend SORB website language to explicitly state positive community outcomes and individual community re-integration through the provision of appropriate housing and employment.

We would be happy to discuss these recommendations further with you or members of the Commission. We thank you for your hard work on this difficult issue and look forward to supporting the Commission's efforts in the months to come.

Best,
Pamela

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