

# CHAPA'S 2023 - 2024 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

*The Goal: 200,000 Homes in Thriving Communities by 2030*



CHAPA believes that everyone should have a safe, healthy, accessible, and affordable home in communities they choose.

CHAPA has a bold plan to cultivate a stronger housing ecosystem statewide by the end of the decade so that all our people, cities, and towns thrive.

Our plan sets a goal of creating 200,000 homes – including 40,000 affordable and 20,000 deeply affordable homes – by 2030.

We can undo discriminatory policies that perpetuate segregation and hinder generational wealth-building while creating more equitable communities by focusing on CHAPA's top legislative priorities:

- Bold investments through a **HOUSING BOND BILL** will help build the deeply affordable homes we need while preserving our public housing.
- **EXPANDING AND IMPROVING OUR STATE RENTAL VOUCHER PROGRAMS** MRVP<sup>1</sup> and AHVP<sup>2</sup> to create more deeply affordable and accessible homes while helping people struggling to pay rent.
- **REDUCING ZONING BARRIERS**<sup>3</sup> to allow for smart growth and keep the economy strong.
- **PRESERVING THE RIGHTS OF PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENTS**<sup>4</sup> in redeveloped properties is essential for housing stability for current and future tenants.
- Establishing a **STATEWIDE OFFICE OF FAIR HOUSING**<sup>5</sup> to help prevent housing discrimination while ensuring everyone is doing their part to affirmatively further fair housing.



PEOPLE



PRODUCTION



PLANNING



PRESERVATION

CHAPA asks that you **support and co-sponsor** each of our legislative priorities! A full list of CHAPA's priority bills are on the next page.

**QUESTIONS?** Contact CHAPA's Director of Public Policy **Eric Shupin** at [eshupin@chapa.org](mailto:eshupin@chapa.org) or 617-682-9712, or CHAPA's Senior Policy Advocate **Abhi Kurve** at [akurve@chapa.org](mailto:akurve@chapa.org) or 617-910-7953.

<sup>1</sup> An Act codifying the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (H.1351 & S.888)

<sup>2</sup> An Act to create affordable homes for persons with disabilities (H.1305 & S.884)

<sup>3</sup> An Act to promote yes in my backyard (H.1379 & S.858)

<sup>4</sup> An Act ensuring continued rights for public housing residents (H.1340 & S.857)

<sup>5</sup> An Act to establish an office of fair housing and fair housing trust fund (H.1377 & S.866)



## PEOPLE

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**PEOPLE DRIVE OUR WORK & ALL OUR OUTCOMES ARE INTENDED TO BENEFIT PEOPLE & THEIR PROSPERITY**

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- Office of Fair Housing & Fair Housing Trust Fund (H.1377 & S.866)
- Access to Counsel in Evictions (H.1731 & S.864)
- Eviction Record Sealing (H.1690 & S.956)
- Matched-Savings Program (H.1023 & S.628)



## PLANNING

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**DESIGN A VIBRANT, AFFORDABLE, INCLUSIVE, & SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR THE COMMONWEALTH & OUR COMMUNITIES**

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- Zoning Reforms to Allow More Homes (H.1379 & S.858)
- Prohibiting Exclusionary Zoning (H.1295 & S.859)



## PRODUCTION

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**CREATE THE HOMES WE NEED THAT ARE AFFORDABLE TO PEOPLE ACROSS ALL INCOME LEVELS**

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- Housing Bond Bill
- Codifying MRVP (H.1351 & S.888)
- Building Accessible & Affordable Homes through AHVP (H.1305 & S.884)
- Supportive Housing Flex Pool (H.1354 & S.855)
- New Revenue for Affordable Housing
  - Deeds Excise Increase (H.2894 & S.1799)
  - Transfer Fee Local Option (H.2747 & S.1771)



## PRESERVATION

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**PRESERVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING & THE ABILITY FOR PEOPLE TO STAY IN THEIR COMMUNITIES**

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- Protecting the Rights of Public Housing Tenants (H.1340 & S.857)
  - Zero Carbon Renovation Fund (H.3232 & S.2365)
  - Massachusetts Healthy Homes Program (H.1307 & S.881)
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## PEOPLE DRIVE OUR WORK & ALL OUR OUTCOMES ARE INTENDED TO BENEFIT PEOPLE & THEIR PROSPERITY

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### AN ACT TO ESTABLISH AN OFFICE OF FAIR HOUSING & FAIR HOUSING TRUST FUND (H.1377 & S.866)

**SPONSORS: REPRESENTATIVES CHYNAH TYLER & DAVE ROGERS & SENATOR LYDIA EDWARDS**

Housing discrimination can occur in many forms leading to unequal treatment of minority home seekers and renters.<sup>1</sup> This legislation would help in combating housing discrimination at all levels, including development, sales, lending, appraisals, marketing, tenant selection, applications, and zoning. An Office of Fair Housing and Fair Housing Trust Fund will help ensure Massachusetts has an institution and the resources needed to create, coordinate, and enforce equitable housing policy and practices across all communities and state agencies.

### AN ACT PROMOTING ACCESS TO COUNSEL AND HOUSING STABILITY IN MASSACHUSETTS (H.1731 & S.864)

**SPONSORS: REPRESENTATIVES DAVE ROGERS & MICHAEL DAY & SENATOR SAL DIDOMENICO**

This legislation will create an Access to Counsel Program that provides legal representation for tenants and owner-occupants with low incomes in eviction proceedings.<sup>2</sup> Legal help and access to the right resources before a court eviction can prevent homelessness, stop illegal or unnecessary evictions, avoid displacement, and create a path to housing stability. The program would be phased in over five years and would help in raising awareness about tenant rights.

### AN ACT PROMOTING HOUSING OPPORTUNITY AND MOBILITY THROUGH EVICTION SEALING (HOMES) (H.1690 & S.956)

**SPONSORS: REPRESENTATIVE MIKE MORAN & SENATOR LYDIA EDWARDS**

As soon as an eviction case is filed, a tenant has an eviction record regardless of the outcome. This can have long-term harmful effects on peoples' ability to access stable and safe homes. This legislation would protect many tenants from being marked with an eviction record by providing a process for tenants to petition the court to seal certain records:

- For tenants facing no-fault eviction after the conclusion of the case;
- For tenants facing a non-payment eviction within 14 days of satisfying a judgment or agreement; and
- For tenants facing fault eviction after 7 years without another fault eviction case.

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<sup>1</sup> Suffolk University Law School, [Qualified Renters Need Not Apply Race and Voucher Discrimination in the Metro Boston Rental Housing Market](#) (July 2020).

<sup>2</sup> [Imbalance of Representation in Massachusetts Eviction Cases](#) (2022) (Massachusetts Trial Court Data shows that 86.6% of property owners are represented while only 11.5% of tenants are represented).

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## **AN ACT TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC MOBILITY THROUGH MATCHED SAVINGS (H.1023 & S.628)**

**SPONSORS: REPRESENTATIVE CARMINE GENTILE & SENATOR JAMIE ELDRIDGE**

Wealth inequality in Massachusetts has increased significantly in the past two decades. The top 1% of Massachusetts earners own almost 24% of the state's total wealth, and the top 10% of earners own upwards of 60% of the state's total wealth.<sup>3</sup> This legislation would create a matched-savings program for participants to identify a savings goal to make a life-changing or wealth-building investment, such as buying their first home. The participant receives financial education and training from a community partner organization, achieves their savings goal, and earns a matched-savings at a rate of 2:1 or 4:1.



## **CREATE THE HOMES WE NEED THAT ARE AFFORDABLE TO PEOPLE ACROSS ALL INCOME LEVELS**

### **PRODUCTION**

#### **HOUSING BOND BILL**

The Housing Bond Bill, expected to be filed by Governor Healey in spring 2023, provides a comprehensive approach to addressing the housing needs of the Commonwealth through resources to produce and preserve affordable homes and public housing. The Housing Bond Bill will recapitalize programs that serve diverse populations, including working families, the elderly, people with disabilities, and those experiencing homelessness.

## **AN ACT CODIFYING THE MASSACHUSETTS RENTAL VOUCHER PROGRAM (H.1351 & S.888)**

**SPONSORS: REPRESENTATIVE ADRIAN MADARO & SENATOR JOAN LOVELY**

Massachusetts led the country in creating the first rental assistance program, the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP). MRVP currently assists over 10,000 households with low- and moderate-incomes with the goal of one day achieving universal rental assistance.<sup>4</sup> For such a large-scale program, MRVP exists only in the state budget and is subject to change each year. This legislation grounds the program in state statute and makes improvements that include:

- Deepening affordability for renters through larger voucher payment shares;
- Improving renter safety by requiring inspections;
- Increasing the administrative fees so regional housing agencies and housing authorities can better cover the cost of the program; and
- Improving data collection.

<sup>3</sup> Economic Policy Institute, [Income Inequality in Massachusetts](#) (July 2018).

<sup>4</sup> The Boston Foundation, [A Right to Rental Assistance in Massachusetts](#) (Dec. 2022).

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## **AN ACT TO CREATE AFFORDABLE HOMES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (H.1305 & S.884)**

**SPONSORS: REPRESENTATIVE ROB CONSALVO & SENATOR ROBYN KENNEDY**

The need for accessible and affordable homes for people with disabilities with low incomes far exceeds the supply in Massachusetts. This bill will build more accessible and affordable homes by improving the Alternative Housing Voucher Program (AHVP), the state's rental assistance program for persons with disabilities. This legislation would align the program better with other rental assistance programs like the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program and allow project-basing of AHVP vouchers.

## **AN ACT TO CREATE AND IMPLEMENT A MASSACHUSETTS FLEXIBLE SUPPORTIVE HOUSING SUBSIDY POOL PROGRAM (H.1354 & S.855)**

**SPONSORS: REPRESENTATIVE JOAN MESCHINO & SENATOR BRENDAN CRIGHTON**

A flexible housing subsidy pool program re-envision the Commonwealth's approach to homelessness by shifting from crisis response to create stability across a continuum of services. This legislation would create a pool of public and private resources by bundling funding for capital, operating, and supportive services to help meet the complex housing and health needs of those experiencing homelessness and to enable funds to get out quickly and equitably.

## **AN ACT PROVIDING FOR CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING INVESTMENTS IN THE COMMONWEALTH (H.2894 & S.1799)**

**SPONSORS: REPRESENTATIVE SAM MONTAÑO & SENATOR JAMIE ELDRIDGE**

This legislation would double the current Deeds Excise Tax to generate an estimated \$300 million in new revenue each year for affordable housing and climate resiliency. This new revenue would create or preserve additional housing for 18,000 working-class homeowners and renters over 10 years; finance hundreds of millions of dollars in competitive, flexible grants to localities for climate resilience and mitigation; and assist between thousands of additional extremely low-income families per year with housing vouchers or project-based rental assistance.

## **AN ACT GRANTING A LOCAL OPTION FOR A REAL ESTATE TRANSFER FEE TO FUND AFFORDABLE HOUSING (H.2747 & S.1771)**

**SPONSORS: REPRESENTATIVE MIKE CONNOLLY & SENATOR JO COMERFORD**

A lack of affordable homes and speculative home sales by higher income buyers have led to soaring housing costs and displacement in Massachusetts. This legislation would allow Massachusetts cities and towns to enact a small fee on high-value real estate sales, in order to create and support affordable housing. This legislation would generate millions of dollars for affordable housing by allowing communities to use this tool tailored to their needs.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Local Option for Housing Affordability Coalition, [Evidence & Studies](#).



## DESIGN A VIBRANT, AFFORDABLE, INCLUSIVE, & SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR THE COMMONWEALTH & OUR COMMUNITIES

### PLANNING

#### AN ACT TO PROMOTE YES IN MY BACKYARD (H.1379 & S.858)

**SPONSORS: REPRESENTATIVES ANDY VARGAS & KEVIN HONAN & SENATOR BRENDAN CRIGHTON**

Restrictive land use policies across Massachusetts have created a paper wall of zoning<sup>6</sup> that limits creation of new homes. This legislation proposes innovative statewide solutions through zoning to create new homes by:

- Setting a statewide affordable housing production goal;
- Allowing accessory dwelling units, or small apartments, to be built in every municipality;
- Allowing duplexes, triple-deckers, and other family-friendly housing around public transportation;
- Making it easier to pass inclusionary zoning bylaws;
- Repurposing vacant commercial properties like strip malls and offices into affordable homes; and
- Prioritizing state-owned land for affordable homes.

#### AN ACT PROMOTING FAIR HOUSING BY PREVENTING DISCRIMINATION AGAINST AFFORDABLE HOUSING (H.1295 & S.859)

**SPONSORS: REPRESENTATIVE CHRISTINE BARBER & SENATOR JULIAN CYR**

Prohibitive local zoning and permitting decisions have perpetuated segregation based on race, socioeconomic, and familial status in Massachusetts over decades. For example, creating only studio apartments or age-restricted homes lead to exclusion of families with children, people with low incomes, and people of color. This legislation will prohibit discrimination through zoning, permitting, or other actions to limit or exclude affordable housing under the state's fair housing law Chapter 151B. This would strengthen our fair housing law and foster communities that are more inclusive.

<sup>6</sup> Amy Dain, [The State of Zoning for Multi-Family Housing In Greater Boston](#) (June 2019).



## PRESERVATION

### PRESERVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING & THE ABILITY FOR PEOPLE TO STAY IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

#### **AN ACT ENSURING CONTINUED RIGHTS FOR PUBLIC HOUSING RESIDENTS (H.1340 & S.857)**

**SPONSORS: REPRESENTATIVE KEVIN HONAN & SENATOR BRENDAN CRIGHTON**

When public housing undergoes redevelopment, there is often change in ownership from the housing authority to a private entity. This legislation would ensure that tenants would retain all rights that they have in public housing if ownership changes in a redeveloped project. Residents would also have a clear path to enforce these rights and would receive technical assistance to allow for meaningful input into the redevelopment projects.

#### **AN ACT ESTABLISHING A ZERO CARBON RENOVATION FUND (H.3232 & S.2365)**

**SPONSORS: REPRESENTATIVE ANDY VARGAS & SENATOR ADAM GOMEZ**

The 2030 Clean Energy and Climate Plan identifies energy efficiency and electrification as the most cost-effective and technologically feasible solution for reducing carbon emissions.<sup>7</sup> The Zero Carbon Renovation Fund would invest \$300 million towards energy efficiency through building envelope upgrades; electrification of building systems; on-site renewable energy; and using low carbon retrofit materials while prioritizing affordable and public housing, schools and environmental justice communities.

#### **AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE HEALTHY HOMES PROGRAM (H.1307 & S.881)**

**SPONSORS: REPRESENTATIVES MANNY CRUZ & SHIRLEY ARRIAGA & SENATOR JOHN KEENAN**

Substandard homes can have many hazards like poor indoor air quality caused by mold, dust, and second-hand smoke; lead paint; poor ventilation; and asbestos. This legislation will create the Massachusetts Healthy Homes Program, providing grants and low-cost loans to income-eligible homeowners and property owners to make the necessary repairs. This investment will improve about 5,000 homes, many of which are in communities of color, impacted by COVID-19, and gateway cities.

**QUESTIONS?** Contact CHAPA's Director of Public Policy [Eric Shupin](mailto:eshupin@chapa.org) at [eshupin@chapa.org](mailto:eshupin@chapa.org) or 617-682-9712, or CHAPA's Senior Policy Advocate [Abhi Kurve](mailto:akurve@chapa.org) at [akurve@chapa.org](mailto:akurve@chapa.org) or 617-910-7953.

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<sup>7</sup> Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, [Massachusetts Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2025 and 2030](#) (June 2022).