

April 16, 2020

The Honorable Kay Khan
House Chairwoman
Joint Committee on Children,
Families & Persons with
Disabilities

The Honorable Sonia
Chang-Diaz
Senate Chairwoman
Joint Committee on
Children, Families &
Persons with Disabilities



Chairwomen Khan and Chang-Diaz and Honorable Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony to the Committee. We realize that these are difficult and unprecedented times and are incredibly grateful for your leadership and for the leadership of your colleagues in the House and the Senate. **I write to you today in strong support of H.4622, An Act to provide short-term relief to families in deep poverty, filed by Representative Marjorie Decker and Senator Sal DiDomenico.**

The Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston (JCRC) was created in 1944 as a collaboration of 16 organizations, with the goal of acting with one unified voice in support of the interests of the Jewish community both locally and globally. Today, JCRC is a coalition of organizations and individuals that continues to represent and advocate for the values, interests and priorities of our community and members. Social justice, and issues of equity are critical to our mission and values.

It is for these reasons that we stand in strong support of H.4622 as part of the broader Lift Our Kids Coalition, made up of over 100 organizations throughout the Commonwealth. In our community, we just celebrated the Feast of Pesach, or Passover. Generally a time to be with family, friends and colleagues, this year many of us had to celebrate separately, or digitally. As we thought about the ways in which we were thankful for our blessings, we also reflected in an even deeper way on what others are lacking.

During times of crisis, as that created by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is often the most vulnerable populations who are hit the hardest, and who take the longest time to recover, even after many have. TAFDC (Transitional Aid for Families with Dependent Children) grants have lost half of their value since 1998 – meaning that current grant levels are approximately one-third of the federal poverty level. We strongly support, as part of the Lift our Kids Coalition, the increase of these grants to ensure that our families and children are not forced to live in Deep Poverty in Massachusetts.

But as we seek more immediate actions for our children and families hardest hit by the current reality of COVID-19, we would urge the Committee and House and Senate leadership to quickly move forward on H.4622, which would offer some additional short-term relief to families to help ensure that they are able to continue to support their family and retain their housing during these exceedingly difficult times.

Therefore, the JCRC and our member organizations respectfully request that the Committee report H.4622 out favorably as quickly as possible. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions at aagulnek@jcrboston.org.

Respectfully Yours

Aaron Agulnek
Director of Government Relations
Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston