

To Whom it May Concern:

I am a life-long resident of Massachusetts, specifically the Metro Boston area. Although I have never experienced long-term houselessness, I've come close, and I know a lot of people who have. I am a sober addict and a survivor of domestic violence. I am also queer. When I had to escape an abusive partner and an abusive household has been the closest I've been to long-term houselessness.

Many people, especially families get kicked out of abusive households with abusive family members/partners, or have to flee abusive situations with little to nothing, because the abuser usually controls money and place they live. Putting a limit on how much time people can spend in one location is just going to add additional stress and is not going to end the cycle of the abuse. The families will either end up with the abuser again, or back on the streets. Those options should be unacceptable for anyone who cares about the welfare of others.

To break the cycle we need foundational support and structure for rehab programs around finding health care, care for children, finding income and eventually a place to live. A lot of people are stuck in generational cycles of abuse, they don't know how to take care of themselves. Being tossed from abusive situation to abusive situation is only going to put oil on the fire for these families. You need stability and reliance and have it be continuous.

The same idea goes for addiction. People who are supported and kept in a program have the highest sobriety rates. People who end up back on the streets don't. I have been sober for seven years, but it was an absolute hell to get care and the only reason I could was because I could afford it and had health insurance that covered detox and decent mental health care. How are you supposed to get sober with no money? It's easier to just drink or use drugs and stave off the effects of withdrawal.

Also invest in supervised consumption clinics.

I know there are millions of ways people can experience houselessness, and this is my own experience. People do not always experience houselessness because they are abused or addicts. That's just my bad luck, and bad luck comes in many forms.

We can reverse and destroy the cycle of abuse, addiction and houselessness with care and respect.

If the state can fund the police with so much money, they can afford to take care of families in their most dire need. **A good idea is directly taking money away from the police and putting it into funding families.**