



Massachusetts Catholic Conference
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December 12, 2013

The Honorable Brian Dempsey
State House
Room 243
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Representative Dempsey,

I write to you today regarding legislation currently housed within the House Committee on Ways and Means that is of great concern to the Catholic Church and some of the most vulnerable citizens of the Commonwealth.

As you know, in August, the Joint Committee on Children and Families reported favorably House Bill 135, "An Act providing housing and support services to unaccompanied homeless youth." This bill, if passed, would direct the Executive Office of Health and Human Services to enter into performance-based contracts with organizations and agencies to provide housing and support services to address the specific needs of unaccompanied homeless youth. Homeless youth are defined by the legislation as a person 24 years of age or younger who is not in the physical custody or care of a parent or legal guardian and who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence."

The four Roman Catholic Bishops in the Commonwealth have supported the passage of this legislation in the past, and applaud the legislature for creating the Commission on Homeless Youth during the last legislative session. However, the vulnerability of this constituency cannot be overstated.

As such, the Massachusetts Catholic Conference respectfully asks the House Committee on Ways and Means to give House Bill 135 a favorable report. Enclosed for your reference is the Conference's past testimony on House Bill 135. If you should have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (617) 746 – 5620 or at jdriscoll@macatholic.org.

Sincerely,

James F. Driscoll, Esq.
Executive Director

cc: The Honorable James O'Day