

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 6, 2023

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Deanne Criswell
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
Washington, DC 20515

Secretary Mayorkas and Administrator Criswell,

We write to call your attention to the need for federal support in states like Massachusetts that are struggling with a surge in migration. While the Shelter and Services Program (SSP) funding is designed to support the type of services our state is now providing to 7,500 families, SSP funding has not been equitably distributed, leaving Massachusetts to expend increasingly large sums of money to provide humanitarian aid to arriving migrants. This presents a significant challenge to Massachusetts and other interior states, which have encountered an unprecedented influx of migrant arrivals. We ask that you continue supporting increased SSP funding levels and ensure equitable distribution of SSP funds between interior states and border states.

On August 8, 2023, Massachusetts Governor Maura Healey declared a state of emergency due to the arrival of migrants seeking shelter and humanitarian aid in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Massachusetts has been placed in a particularly precarious position, with the Commonwealth recently announcing that it has run out of shelter capacity, forcing the state to turn away migrants in need. Currently, around 30-40 families arrive each day in Massachusetts seeking temporary housing, but only 15-20 families exit the emergency shelter system on a daily basis. The discrepancy in these numbers has crippled the Commonwealth's ability to house and feed both migrant and unhoused families in need.

The United States has been experiencing a virtually unprecedented number of new arrivals, with an increasing trend of migrant families ending up in interior states like Massachusetts. This shift in migration patterns has given interior states a larger role in the immigration process. States like Massachusetts, New York, and Illinois have encountered significantly higher rates of migrant arrivals over a short period of time, placing a heavy burden on states' systems that were not designed to process such high numbers of arrivals.

We commend you both on your work to increase funding for the SSP in the Administration's border supplemental request. Furthermore, we stand committed to both protecting our asylum system and providing SSP dollars in the face of Republican attacks. SSP funds are vital to support states encountering large numbers of migrants who need humanitarian assistance. However, the \$1.4 billion requested in the supplemental will not cover the high expenses states are currently encountering, especially interior states. Massachusetts only received about \$2

million dollars in funding from the program this year. As of August, Massachusetts was spending more than \$45 million a month to house, feed, and provide necessary medical services to migrant families.¹ Therefore, the \$1.4 billion supplemental request is a fraction of the collective need of our state, interior states, and border communities. As such, we urge you to distribute all future SSP funds equitably, ensuring a fair and humanitarian response to the surge in migration.

We hope to continue working with you and Governor Healey to provide humane support for families in need. We thank you both for your continued action and flexibility.

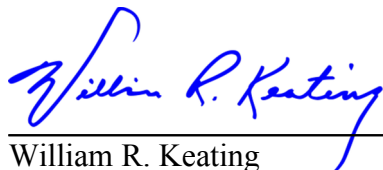
Sincerely,



Lori Trahan
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



William R. Keating
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress

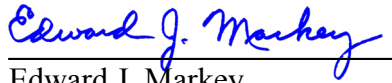


Jake Auchincloss
Member of Congress

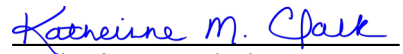


Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress

¹ Chris Lisinski, "Healey Bill Pours \$250 Million More into Massachusetts Shelter Crisis," CBS News, September 14, 2023, <https://www.cbsnews.com/boston/news/massachusetts-emergency-shelter-migrants-funding-healey/>.



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Katherine M. Clark
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress