



THE GENERAL COURT OF MASSACHUSETTS
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053

July 21, 2021

Hon. John Lawn, Chair
Joint Committee on Healthcare Financing
State House, Room 236
Boston, MA 02133

Hon. Cindy Friedman, Chair
Joint Committee on Healthcare Financing
State House, Room 208
Boston, MA 02133

Re: H1290/S761 *An Act to streamline access to critical public health and safety-net programs through the common application*

Dear Chair Lawn and Chair Friedman,

We are writing to you today to ask for a favorable report for our bill H1290/S761 *An Act to streamline access to critical public health and safety-net programs through the common application*. This bill aims to create a common application process for critical public health and safety-net programs for eligible Massachusetts residents.

The eligibility parameters for many safety-net programs are similar and yet individuals must apply for each program separately and are not informed they are eligible for other benefits. For example, there are 700,000 individuals who are MassHealth recipients and likely eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) but are not receiving the benefit. This bill would permanently amend state law to allow low-income households to apply to both MassHealth/Medicare Savings Program and SNAP at the same time thereby closing that gap and decreasing food insecurity in the Commonwealth.

During the peak of the COVID-19 crisis many individuals were applying for public benefits for the first time without an understanding of what they could receive. A common application would streamline that process, improve efficiency, and remove barriers for income-less and low-income families in need. Finally, for programs like SNAP, it would increase access to 100 percent federally-funded nutrition dollars that would go back into our local economies to help with the continued recovery from the pandemic.

There is no better time to implement the common application so that we can continue to assist the individuals and families most in need. We urge you to report H1290/S761 favorably from the committee. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Jay Livingstone in black ink.

Jay Livingstone
State Representative
8th Suffolk District

Handwritten signature of Sal DiDomenico in black ink.

Sal DiDomenico
State Senator
Middlesex and Suffolk District