March xx, 2026

House Committee on Ways and Means
24 Beacon Street, Room 243
Boston, MA 02133

Senate Committee on Ways and Means
24 Beacon Street, Room 212
Boston, MA 02133

Re: Opposition to H2 Outside Sections 49, 70 and 71

Dear Chair Michlewitz, Chair Rodrigues, and members of the House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means:

As organizations who represent and serve low-income older adults, individuals with disabilities, and families with children, we write to urge you to reject two changes to cash assistance benefits proposed by Governor Healey in H2. As explained below, these proposals would result in the loss of critical subsistence benefits by some of the lowest-income households in the Commonwealth.

$2,000 EAEDC asset limit would deny benefits to destitute people (outside section 49)

EAEDC (Emergency Aid to Elderly, Disabled and Children) provides cash assistance to adults who are 65 or older or who cannot work due to disabilities, as well as a small number of children who are not living with a close relative. The benefit amounts are very low: the maximum grant for one person with no income is only $441/month.

The previous $250 EAEDC asset limit was eliminated in 2021, in recognition that it posed a bureaucratic barrier for impoverished older adults and people with disabilities. Almost no applicants or recipients had assets above $250, but they were often unable to prove it. People struggled to verify that an old bank account was empty or that the broken-down car they were sleeping in had no salvage value. The Legislature removed the asset test to ensure that impoverished people could access the subsistence benefits they need to survive.

The Administration estimates that imposing a $2,000 asset limit starting in October 2026 will result in the denial of EAEDC benefits to 900 individuals in FY 27. Collectively, these individuals would lose $2.9 million. Nearly all of them would be left with no income at all.

The Administration's estimated cost savings do not account for the administrative costs of implementing a new asset test. The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) would need to make IT changes, re-design notices, train caseworkers and devote ongoing staff time to helping elderly and disabled clients navigate this rule.

We strongly oppose this proposal to cut off vulnerable members of our communities, leaving them without any source of support.

"Employment Bridge" would cut benefits for TAFDC families with the lowest wages (outside sections 70 and 71)

The Administration proposes to change how earnings are counted when a parent receiving TAFDC (Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children) gets a job. Under current law, enacted in 2018, DTA does not count any of the earnings when calculating the TAFDC grant for 6 months. Instead of having their benefit reduced or terminated, working families continue to receive the maximum TAFDC grant for their family size.

After 6 months, earnings count against a TAFDC grant after deducting $200 for work expenses and half of the remainder. If the amount of earnings left after these deductions exceeds the TAFDC grant amount, the family is no longer eligible for TAFDC.

The Administration's proposal would eliminate the 6-month disregard of all earnings and replace it with a policy that would only help families who are earning enough that they would not be eligible for TAFDC when deducting $200 plus half of the remainder. Families with lower-paying jobs would lose out on having all their earnings disregarded for 6 months and instead face immediate reductions in assistance.

Compare the following examples:

- A family of three with earnings of $2,000/month would receive payments of nearly $1,300/month (1.5 times the maximum grant for three) for 4 months. They would receive the same total amount of cash that they receive now.
- A family of three with earnings of $1,000/month would face an immediate loss of $400/month in cash assistance. Over 6 months, this family would lose $2,400 compared to under current law.

The Administration's goal is to enable the families with higher earnings to qualify for more SNAP benefits for 5 months. We agree that these families still need help and share the goal of maximizing SNAP benefits.

However, the proposal would make things worse for families with lower-paying jobs, counting almost half of their earnings against the grant and cutting their assistance as soon as they start working. The Administration projects that these families will lose $11 million/year because they would no longer benefit from the 6-month boost for working families.

We strongly oppose reducing cash assistance for the working families who need it most.

In summary, the Governor's proposals would take cash assistance away from very low-income families and individuals, making it even harder for them to meet their basic needs. We ask the Legislature to reject both the EAEDC asset limit proposal and the "Employment Bridge" proposal.

Sincerely,

Cc: House Speaker Ronald Mariano
Senate President Karen Spilka