



Office of
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Representative Kane continues to oppose additional funding for emergency assistance shelter program without reforms

Calls the current system unsustainable without meaningful changes being made

BOSTON – State Representative Hannah Kane (R-Shrewsbury) continues to oppose providing additional funding to the state’s emergency assistance shelter system, saying a newly-enacted supplemental spending bill lacks sufficient reforms to help ensure the program’s long-term financial stability.

With annual state spending on the system costing taxpayers approximately \$1 billion a year, Representative Kane voted against the enactment of the supplemental spending bill on February 26, saying she could not support allocating another \$425 million to the program unless additional steps are taken to improve transparency and guarantee accountability for the state’s taxpayers. The bill is now on Governor Maura Healey’s desk for her review and signature.

Representative Kane initially voted against an earlier version of the supplemental budget when it passed the House on February 6 by a 126-26 margin. An amended version of the bill that was agreed to by House and Senate leadership passed the House on February 25, with Republicans again opposing the measure.

During the initial February 6 floor debate on the supplemental budget, Representative Kane supported a series of amendments offered by the House Republican Caucus that were designed to help enhance transparency, accountability, public safety and fiscal responsibility within the emergency shelter program. While the House unanimously adopted a Republican proposal requiring all funding expended for services provided through the emergency housing assistance program to be subject to a competitive bidding process, it rejected many other substantive reform proposals put forth by the caucus.

To help keep dangerous criminals out of the state’s shelter system, the House Republican Caucus previously offered an amendment to mandate comprehensive universal background checks to weed out shelter applicants with criminal records at the state, federal and international levels. Representative Kane said the final bill falls far short of this public safety goal by simply requiring individuals applying for emergency assistance housing benefits to voluntarily disclose their prior criminal convictions and only requiring that CORI checks be conducted prior to placement, which are limited strictly to crimes committed in Massachusetts.

House Republicans also previously sought to limit shelter admissions to individuals who have established Massachusetts residency for at least 12 consecutive months immediately prior to applying for assistance. This proposal would have allowed for waiving the minimum residency requirement for victims of domestic violence and for individuals whose living situation has been affected by a fire or other natural disaster that occurred in Massachusetts.

Over the last two years, the demand for shelter placement has dramatically increased due to the migrant crisis, with thousands of newly arrived individuals and families from out of state seeking to access services. Representative Kane noted that House Republicans have continued to advocate for restoring the original intent

of the state's right to shelter law by prioritizing housing for Massachusetts residents so that longtime residents in need are not displaced by those who have only recently come to the state.

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