



ROSIE'S
PLACE



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Public Policy Summer Newsletter

Rosie's Place works to protect the benefits and civil rights of our guests and educate our community on policy and voting. This summer we participated in hearings for priority bills and continued advocating for the Fair Share Amendment and Transgender Rights. We also presented another Public Policy Guest Training series to eight guests. Upon completion, class graduates receive a certificate from the training and continue on to advocate for themselves and their communities. Frequently, we learn that guests are using the skills they have learned through the training. Many women who were never involved in public policy before go on to lead forums on climate change or testify about homelessness funding at the State House.

--Mehreen Butt, Director of Public Policy

Registering New Voters

In July, Rosie's Place joined a group of volunteers with the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA) to register newly sworn-in citizens to vote. Inside Faneuil Hall, 375 new citizens recited the oath of allegiance and received their certificates of naturalization. Once outside, the volunteers



congratulated the new citizens and offered to register them to vote.

The swearing-in ceremony was one of approximately 50 held in the state annually. Each year, between 20,000-30,000 legal permanent residents naturalize in Massachusetts. Rosie's Place knows that immigrant voices make our democracy stronger, so we are excited to partner with MIRA to register these new American citizens.

[Learn more about our commitment to voting and elections.](#)

Fair Share Amendment Headed to the 2018 Ballot

On June 14th, the Massachusetts Legislature voted for the second time in a Constitutional Convention to send the Fair Share Amendment to the ballot in 2018. As a member of the [Raise Up Massachusetts coalition](#), Rosie's Place guests and staff have been a part of the effort to bring the Fair Share amendment to the ballot since 2015, [gathering signatures and lobbying their elected officials.](#)

In November 2018, Massachusetts voters will decide whether or not to amend the state constitution to institute a progressive income tax, raising \$2 billion for public education and transportation.



Public Policy Training for Guests

Eight guests participated in our Public Policy Training in June. Over the course of two weeks, the class learned about state and local government and developed their skills as advocates on



social justice issues ranging from welfare reform to gun violence. On the final day, the group visited Boston City Hall and met with [At-Large Councilor Annissa Essaibi George](#), Chair of the Committee on Homelessness, Mental Health, and Recovery. The guests shared their policy concerns and had a tour of Ianella Chamber, where City Council meetings and hearings are held.

Help Protect TPS for Haiti

In May, the Department of Homeland Security announced a limited extension of Temporary Protected Status for Haiti until January of 2018. If DHS does not extend TPS past January, approximately 4,000 Haitians in Massachusetts will lose the ability to live and work legally in the United States. [Visit our website for more information about advocating for Haiti TPS.](#)

Legislative Priorities Update

Each of our 2017-2018 legislative priorities had their public hearings in May and June. We are now looking for the committees to report each of the bills out favorably.

Bill	Status
Safe Communities Act (S.1305/H.3269)	Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security
SNAP Gap (S.612/H.101)	Joint Committee on Health Care Financing/ Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities
Lift the Cap (S.34/H.85)	Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities

[Learn more about our priorities.](#)

Protecting the Transgender Non-discrimination Law

Rosie's Place celebrated **LGBTQ+**Pride Month in June. Vashti Selix, field organizer from [Freedom Massachusetts](#), gave a presentation to guests about the 2016 Massachusetts law prohibiting discrimination against transgender and gender-nonconforming individuals in public spaces. Since 1974, Rosie's Place has welcomed all those in need who self-identify as women, and we supported the passage of the 2016 law.



Rosie's Place is committed to continuing to work with Freedom Massachusetts to resist a ballot campaign to repeal these essential protections in 2018.

(**LGBTQ+** stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer. The + symbolizes the inclusion of other genders and sexual identities.)

Budget Priorities Update

After a delay due to lower than expected revenues, the state legislature approved a budget for FY18 on July 7th. In such a tight budget year, we are pleased about the inclusion of

funding and language benefiting Rosie's Place guests. In particular, we thank the legislature for authorizing the statewide expansion of the Housing Court (with \$1 million of dedicated funding) and for directing the Executive Office of Health and Human Services and the Department of Transitional Assistance to issue a report by January 2018 on the feasibility of a common application portal to [close the SNAP gap](#).

Please call Governor Baker at 617-725-4005 before July 17th (the deadline for him to make any vetoes or sign the final budget law) and ask him to support these priorities.

About Rosie's Place

Rosie's Place was founded in 1974 as the first women's shelter in the United States. Our mission is to provide a safe and nurturing environment that helps poor and homeless women maintain their dignity, seek opportunity and find security in their lives. [Read more](#).

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