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Public Policy December Newsletter

Rosie's Place works to protect the benefits and civil rights of our guests and to educate our community on policy and voting. We hope you'll take a minute to catch up on our recent priorities and activities and review ways to get involved this winter.

Raise Up Campaign

Rosie's Place recently partnered with the Raise Up Coalition to gather signatures needed to place two ballot questions on the November 2018 statewide ballot.



The ballot questions propose to:

1. Increase the Minimum Wage to \$15 an hour.

2. Provide Paid Family and Medical Leave for Massachusetts Employees.

Rosie's Place contributed 1,200 signatures to a total of 270,000 the Coalition collected across the state. In a few months it will be determined if there are enough certified signatures for the questions to appear on the 2018 ballot. Visit [Raise Up Coalition](#) for more information, and stay tuned for on how you can help us advocate for these issues in the months ahead.

2018 Ballot Questions

Rosie's Place will be supporting two additional ballot questions in the coming year; supporting the Fair Share Amendment and upholding the 2016 Transgender Equality Law.

Fair Share Amendment: Rosie's Place is advocating for the Fair Share Amendment, which would amend the Massachusetts Constitution to create an additional 4% tax on annual income above \$1 million, asking only those with the highest incomes to pay a little more. The new revenue generated by this tax would be earmarked for quality public education, affordable public colleges and universities, and for repair and maintenance of roads, bridges, and public transportation.

In 2015, the Raise Up Campaign, along with Rosie's Place, collected more than 157,000 signatures from Massachusetts voters to qualify the Fair Share Amendment for the 2018 ballot. In 2016 and 2017, the campaign won two votes by the full state Legislature needed to place the Fair Share Amendment on the November 2018 ballot.

Stayed tuned as Rosie's Place begins an educational campaign in 2018 to advocate for progressive taxes and more funding for transportation and education.

Transgender Equality Law: In 2016, Rosie's Place endorsed the Transgender Equality Law to protect the civil rights for all Massachusetts residents. Two years later, a broad coalition has formed to defeat an initiative on the statewide ballot in November 2018 that would repeal our state's non-discrimination law ensuring fair and equal treatment for our transgender neighbors, family and friends. Rosie's Place, as the oldest women's shelter in the country, has been committed to serving all guests who identify as women. We look forward to supporting a ballot initiative that protects the civil rights of our guests.

Learn more about how you can help and find more information about the Campaign [here](#).

Temporary Protected Status

The Department of Homeland Security announced in November 2017 that it is terminating Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for Haiti. The Haitian TPS status will end in July 2019. TPS affects about 58,000 Haitians, including over 4,000 Massachusetts residents and their families, many of whom visit Rosie's Place for services. Rosie's Place and our partner Irish International Immigration Center (IIIC) will continue to help guests reapply for their Employment Authorization Documents so that they have legal status through July 2019.



Members of Congress and the State Legislature have vocalized their displeasure in the termination of TPS for Haiti. Senator Elizabeth Warren and Senator Ed Markey have pledged to work on a legislative solution to allow Haitians to legally stay in America. Please call Senator Elizabeth Warren [(617) 565-3170], and Senator Ed Markey [(617) 565-8519] with the following message:

- Hi my name is _____ and I live in _____.
- Thank you for your pledge to find a legislative fix and I urge you to continue working to help the 4,000 Haitian TPS families in Massachusetts.
- Please find a way to ensure that Haitians can stay legally in the United States.

This [article](#) by WBUR outlines the impact of this government action on Haitians in the state.

Protecting Food Programs in the Federal Budget

Congress has hinted that entitlement programs, including food benefits, will be cut in the federal budget. Rosie's Place believes that all women should have access to food, no matter their economic standing. For this reason, we support the Supplemental Nutritional Access Program (SNAP). More than 770,000 Massachusetts residents (1 in 9) receive SNAP benefits and those numbers are increasing. Many of our guests rely on this essential program and, now more than ever, SNAP programs need to expand, not be threatened. Please [contact](#) your elected officials and remind them of the importance of SNAP in Massachusetts.

Legislation Update

Legislative hearings at the Massachusetts State House continue for the 2017-2018 session. In addition to advocating for our priorities, Rosie's Place endorses [Senate Bill 46, An Act Creating a Bill of Rights for People Experiencing Homelessness](#).

The bill, and its companion bill [House Bill 695](#), would serve as a statement of legislative intent for state and municipal agencies to uphold the stand that no person in the Commonwealth should be subject to discrimination based on their housing status. The bill advocates for people experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity to ensure they have the same rights recognized as their neighbors who are living in permanent housing.

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The legislation would give people experiencing homelessness:

- The right to move freely in public spaces
- The right to equal treatment by state, city, and town agencies
- The right to non-discrimination in employment
- The right to emergency medical care
- The right to register to vote, and to exercise the right to vote, without a permanent address
- The right to privacy of records and property

Currently, almost 3,600 families live in Emergency Assistance (EA) placements and over 3,000 individuals are staying in adult shelters. Rosie's Place sees 12,000 women each year, many of whom are homeless and housing insecure. Rosie's Place supports SB46 and HB695 to create a bill of rights for homeless women.

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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