



217 South Street
Waltham, MA 02453-2769
Phone (781) 891-6270



MASSACHUSETTS

400 West Cummings Park
Suite 6650
Woburn MA 01801
Phone: (781) 938-4048

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Joint Committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets
State House
Boston, MA 02133

Our organizations would like to voice our support for H3428, An Act Creating a State Hospital Disposition Fund, filed by Rep. Kay Khan. We were disappointed to learn this bill was heard by your Committee yesterday – had we prior notice, we would have appreciated the opportunity to provide verbal testimony. We hope members of the Committee are able to consider the following words of support for this legislation that would provide significant increased housing capacity for persons with mental illness and mental retardation.

As you may be aware, the bill would earmark 50% of monies derived from the sale or transfer of state hospital (DMH) property to be made available for the development of housing for persons served by the Department of Mental Health. We understand Rep. Khan offered verbal testimony supporting the inclusion of additional language that would create a separate state school (DMR) property disposition fund to allow for similar dedicated housing resources to be made available to persons served by the Department of Mental Retardation. We support this added language.

According to the U.S Supreme Court's *Olmstead* Decision and a subsequent technical advisory issued by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Massachusetts must provide equitable community-based services, including housing for people with disabilities. The Commonwealth has made little progress towards meeting this goal. This legislation would provide a dedicated funding stream to meet the state's obligations under *Olmstead*. It is good economic and public policy, and a fair allocation of funds given the fact that state schools and state hospitals serve specific populations and are assets of all residents of the Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

Leo V. Sarkissian
Executive Director
The Arc of Massachusetts

Tobias Fisher
Executive Director
NAMI Massachusetts