

Support the Immigrant Legal Defense Act

An Act Ensuring Access to Equitable Representation in Immigration Proceedings

[S.1127](#) (Sen. Gomez) and [H.1954](#) (Reps. Rogers, F. Moran)

With a federal administration committed to the mass detention and deportation of immigrants, and a new Congress actively stripping away existing rights and privileges, the Commonwealth must urgently intervene to prevent the deportation of immigrants who live, work and pay taxes in Massachusetts.

The Immigrant Legal Defense Act would create a public and private-funded program to provide no-cost immigration legal defense to immigrants in Massachusetts who are at imminent risk of deportation, especially those held in federal immigration detention.

FACTS:

In immigration court, having an attorney is critical protection against deportation and permanent family separation. There is no right to a government-paid lawyer in immigration court. Those who cannot afford a lawyer must navigate our complex immigration proceedings alone.

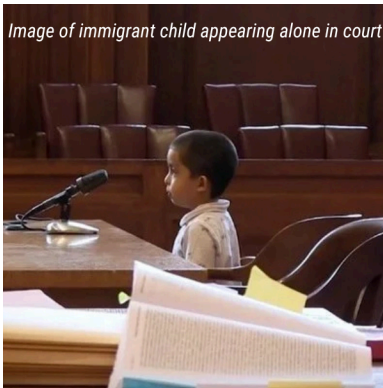


Image of immigrant child appearing alone in court

Immigrants are 5 times more likely to win relief from deportation if they are represented by counsel. **In Massachusetts, 55% of immigrants with pending cases are navigating their proceedings without a lawyer.**

Detained immigrants with a lawyer are 10 times more likely to win relief than are detained immigrants without one. **There are 369 people in federal immigration detention in Massachusetts as of January 2025.**

Similar programs exist in California, Colorado, Illinois, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, and Washington.

THE SOLUTION: The Immigrant Legal Defense Act would:

- ✓ Subject to appropriation, **require the Massachusetts Office for Refugees and Immigrants (ORI) to grant funds to qualified immigration legal service providers** and the nonprofit organizations and law firms who employ them to provide no-cost legal defense to eligible low-income immigrants.
- ✓ **Develop a statewide system** of immigration legal representation coordinated by an existing or established nonprofit organization identified by ORI, which will provide rigorous screening and assigning of cases and beneficiaries.
- ✓ **Establish an advisory board** to include representation by the Committee for Public Counsel Services, the American Immigration Lawyers Association, MIRA Coalition, and at least three community-based organizations that directly serve immigrant populations.

STATEWIDE ENDORSING ORGANIZATIONS

American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts (ACLUM)
Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence (ATASK)
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-MA)
Health Care for All
Jewish Alliance for Law and Social Action (JALSA)
Latinos Unidos en Massachusetts
Mass 50501
Mass Appleseed
Mass Association of Teachers of Speakers of Other Languages (MATSOL)
Mass NOW
Massachusetts Action for Justice
Massachusetts Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers
Massachusetts Association of Portuguese Speakers (MAPS)
Massachusetts Communities Action Network (MCAN)
Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA)
Progressive Massachusetts
Reproductive Equity Now

REGIONAL/LOCAL ENDORSING ORGANIZATIONS

Agencia ALPHA	Jewish Vocational Services
Boston City Council (Resolution Passed)	Lowell Alliance
Boston Missionary Baptist Community Center, Inc.	Lowell Community Health Center
Brazilian Worker Center	Merrimack Valley Project (MVP)
Brazilian Women's Group	Metrowest Worker Center (Casa)
Brookline Town Council (Resolution Passed)	Mt. Toby Meeting of Friends
Cambridge United for Justice with Peace	Needham Area Immigration Justice Task Force
Catholic Charities of Springfield	Northampton Friends Meeting
Center for New Americans	Rosie's Place
Coalition for a Better Acre	Safe Passages, Inc.
Community Action Agency of Somerville	SEIU 1199
Community Economic Development Center of SEMA	SEIU 32BJ
Dominican Development Center	SEIU 509
Essex County Community Organization (ECCO)	Shut Up Until You're There (SUUYT)
Franciscan Order of Saint Joseph Cupertino	Somerville City Council (Resolution Passed)
Haitian Community Partners Foundation	Student Clinic for Immigrant Justice (SCIJ)
Indivisible Easthampton	The Welcome Project
International Institute of New England (IINE)	True Alliance Center / Haitian Americans United, Inc.
Jewish Family Services of Metrowest	

To join our campaign, contact organizing@miracoalition.org.