

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.



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.

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

STATEWIDE ENDORSING ORGANIZATIONS

American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts (ACLUM)
Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence (ATASK)
Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR-MA)
Equity Now & Beyond
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
Women's Bar Association of Massachusetts

REGIONAL/LOCAL ENDORSING ORGANIZATIONS

Agencia ALPHA
Boston City Council (Resolution Passed)
Boston Missionary Baptist Community Center, Inc.
Brazilian Worker Center
Brazilian Women's Group
Brookline for Racial Justice & Equity
Brookline Town Council (Resolution Passed)
Cambridge United for Justice with Peace
Catholic Charities of Springfield
Center for New Americans
Citizens For Juvenile Justice
Coalition for a Better Acre
Community Action Agency of Somerville
Community Economic Development Center of SEMA
Dominican Development Center
Essex County Community Organization (ECCO)
Franciscan Order of Saint Joseph Cupertino
Haitian Community Partners Foundation
Indivisible Easthampton
International Institute of New England (IINE)
Jewish Family Services of Metrowest

Jewish Vocational Services
Lowell Alliance
Lowell Community Health Center
Merrimack Valley Project (MVP)
Metrowest Worker Center (Casa)
Mt. Toby Meeting of Friends
Needham Area Immigration Justice Task Force
Northampton Friends Meeting
Rosie's Place
Safe Passages, Inc.
SEIU 1199
SEIU 32BJ
SEIU 509
Shut Up Until You're There (SUUYT)
Solidarity Lowell
Somerville City Council (Resolution Passed)
Student Clinic for Immigrant Justice (SCIJ)
The House of the Seven Gables Settlement Association
The Welcome Project
True Alliance Center / Haitian Americans United, Inc.

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