

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

March 18, 2021

The Honorable Charlie Baker  
Massachusetts Statehouse  
24 Beacon St.  
Boston, MA 02108

Dear Governor Baker:

We are writing to express our continued support for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to equitably distribute federal aid to communities that have been hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a delegation, we have fought to secure this critical funding to help Massachusetts respond to this public health emergency. We know that you share our concerns about ensuring that these federal dollars are directed to our most vulnerable populations to help them recover from the economic and health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the recession.

The American Rescue Plan (ARP), which was signed into law by President Biden on March 11, 2021, includes \$350 billion for state and local governments.<sup>1</sup> As you are well aware, we have fought for this state and local government funding since the beginning of the pandemic – including the federal support provided by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act – and understand how significant these resources are to the Commonwealth’s recovery. The ARP utilizes the existing statute for the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) formula to determine the amount of assistance provided to each community, known as “entitlement communities.” CDBG is a federal program that your administration has lauded for the critical assistance it offers to Massachusetts families and businesses affected by COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Massachusetts Municipal Association, “MMA provides an analysis of municipal aid expected from American Rescue Plan,” press release, March 12, 2021, <https://www.mma.org/mma-provides-analysis-of-municipal-aid-expected-from-american-rescue-plan/>.

<sup>2</sup> Office of Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito, “Baker-Polito Administration Announces \$20 Million to Support Vital Social Services, Small Businesses,” press release, July 16, 2020, <https://www.mass.gov/news/baker-polito-administration-announces-20-million-to-support-vital-social-services-small>.

Under these criteria, metropolitan cities with populations of at least 50,000 receive an additional allocation of this new federal funding. This means that some of our Massachusetts cities that are under this population threshold are not eligible for these additional dollars, regardless of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the community. Since these criteria use recent census data, communities of color and immigrant communities that are historically under-represented in census counts will potentially receive less federal resources.

We recognize that these municipalities need more assistance, especially our communities of color which continue to be disproportionately impacted by this pandemic. Fortunately, the legislation we have recently passed also allocates \$4.5 billion in federal aid to the Commonwealth<sup>3</sup> and we urge you to work to target these federal dollars to these communities that are in desperate need of relief.

We are aware that your administration has designated 20 communities across the Commonwealth for a new, targeted effort to improve outreach on the COVID-19 vaccine, including access to the vaccine. This initiative provides a blueprint to equitably distribute state and federal resources such as ARP funding to those communities that do not qualify for additional dollars under the CDBG formula.

Cities and towns in Massachusetts and across the country are on the frontlines of our fight against this pandemic, and they require our support. We will continue to fight on behalf of all our communities in need, and respectfully call on you to do the same. We respectfully request that you use your discretion under the ARP to direct these new federal funds to our communities that need it the most. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator



Ayanna Pressley  
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress

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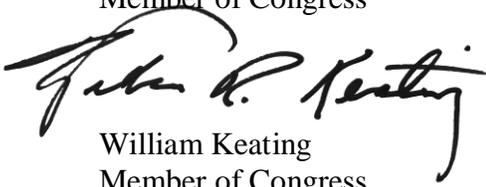
<sup>3</sup> NBC Boston, "Billions in Federal Aid Heading to Massachusetts Cities, Towns," Katie Lannon, March 15, 2021, <https://www.nbcboston.com/news/local/billions-in-federal-aid-heading-to-massachusetts-cities-towns/2328897/>.



Stephen Lynch  
Member of Congress



Katherine M. Clark  
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



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Lori Trahan  
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Jake Auchincloss  
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