

Senate 65

Sample Letter to the Editor

To the Editor:

It is imperative for our community, our region and our state to recognize the important services that human service providers deliver to our area and our lives. Many may not know the sacrifices these professionals play in taking care of and looking out for the most vulnerable people in our society.

Whether the populations they are serving are children at risk of abuse and neglect, people with developmental disabilities, individuals with mental health problems, people who are homeless or individuals seeking safety from threats of violence, human service workers care for them, protect them and ensure they enjoy life to the fullest. And they do so making comparatively paltry salaries.

Even fewer realize the importance of these workers mean to our local and state economy. The human service industry is invaluable to Massachusetts – accounting for 185,000 jobs. From 1998 to 2003, the Massachusetts workforce increased by only 1.7 percent, but the human service workforce jumped by 18 percent. The demand for their services has made this a growth industry – one with a tremendous amount of economic impact. Human service workers contribute over \$100 million in tax revenue to cities, towns and the state.

This is why it is so important for the public to demand that their legislators protect these employees and these jobs. Government leaders have not adjusted the rates they pay for services provided since 1987. That means the businesses – and just because they are non-profits doesn't mean they are not businesses – are being reimbursed for fuel for transportation, heat and rent at 1987 levels. We all know how costs have skyrocketed in the past 21 years.

Please implore your elected officials to support *The Campaign to Strengthen Human Services* by supporting Senate Bill 65, which would require the state to readjust the rates to the actual cost of services provided. The bill is currently pending at the committee level, and it is tremendously important for it to reach Governor Patrick's desk before the session ends in July. It is important for the people being cared for and equally important for all of us who need Massachusetts to have a strong economy that protects all of us.