

Governor Charles Baker
Massachusetts State House
24 Beacon St.
Office of the Governor, Room 280
Boston, MA 02133



RE: Massachusetts using questionable strategies to justify implementing a redundant service that creates yet another silo in the already complex affordable/special needs housing system.

Dear Governor Baker,

A non-profit group calling itself the *Massachusetts Housing Navigator* issued a press release in November 2019 **in conjunction with various state agencies**, to announce the launch of a joint venture for low-income housing searchers. **The non-profit press release enlists state employees in (perhaps unwittingly) promoting misinformation by stating that no such service already exists and that this will be a 'first' in Massachusetts.** However, HousingWorks.net has been providing this exact same, free, and comprehensive service for 20 years – *along with many other desperately needed services that will not be available from the state's proposed new silo.*

Aside from the ethics of allowing state employees to mis-represent a private competitor, families seeking affordable housing will suffer in dramatic and concrete ways if they see these press releases (see Appendix II to this letter).

And while the Commonwealth is wasting energy behind yet another redundant service, in the coming months state government will be struggling to provide additional housing stabilization services because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Rather than create another silo, state resources could best be directed towards filling in gaps that remain even with a comprehensive service like HousingWorks. We believe the governor should be made aware of these issues, the existence of a proven affordable housing search & apply services, and a list of current gaps in service that the state is in the best position to implement.

HousingWorks team and Board members have reached out to Massachusetts Housing Navigator, Inc. (MHNI) leadership regarding the misstatements in their press release. We reached out through the Boston Foundation, and spoke with Jennifer Gilbert, Executive Director of the Kuehn Charitable Foundation (she is both the funder and MHNI President of this project). While all have stated knowledge of HousingWorks, no one has agreed to change their public misstatements.

The proposed partnership with the state is designed after the Minnesota affordable housing web based search & apply system - which includes a state requirement that all housing providers keep the housing waitlist data up-to-date – while HousingWorks supports this idea, it has successfully achieved the same goal of maintaining up-to-date housing waitlist information for the past 20 years using other incentives.

We are writing today to share information and to request a meeting in the Governor's office to discuss remedies to this ongoing misinformation and to share our experience. Please contact me to arrange a time to meet either via GoToMeeting/Zoom or in person with appropriate COVID-19 precautions.

Thank you for taking time to review attached materials and working with our team to resolve our stated concerns.

Sincerely,

Daniel J. Curley, Principal - HousingWorks, Incorporated
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[Appendix I: MISLEADING QUOTES FROM STATE OFFICIALS AND PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS](#)

[Appendix II - PROBLEMS RESULTING FROM THE PROPOSED NAVIGATOR SILO](#)

[Appendix III: STATISTICS ABOUT HOUSINGWORKS](#)