

An act relative to a livable wage for human services workers

Bill purpose: To eliminate the pay disparity that exists between the salaries of human services workers employed by community-based human service providers and state employees holding similar job titles who perform similar work.

Recent action: H.191 (Rep. Khan) and S.84 (Sen. Friedman) sent to the Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities in March 2023.

Key Facts:

- Similar job titles and roles exist for individuals employed by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and those employed at private, community-based human services nonprofits, but the rate of pay is often drastically different – sometimes by up to 30 percent.
- The Commonwealth is the largest purchaser of human services from community-based human services nonprofits.
- The model budgets often created by the Commonwealth for human services programs contain salaries that are far lower than what the state pays for similar positions.
- Due to this salary disparity, it is becoming increasingly difficult for community-based organizations to recruit/retain qualified workers in the sector, which has nearly 160,000 jobs.
- Without a solution to the workforce crisis, an increasing number of jobs will go unfilled and programs may close, leading to a loss of services for vulnerable Massachusetts residents.

If passed, this legislation would:

- Set a schedule to fully eliminate the pay disparity between state workers and those employed by community-based human services nonprofits who are doing similar work.
- Eliminate the pay disparity between state workers and those at community-based human services nonprofits no later than July 1, 2027.
- Create a report from the Commonwealth to various committees in the Legislature that outlines the current disparity amount and the annual increases necessary to eliminate the disparity amount by July 1, 2024.
- Create a report from the Commonwealth to various committees in the Legislature that makes recommendations about how to strengthen recruitment and retention of human services workers at private, community-based human services nonprofits by January 1, 2024.
- Apply to human services workers employed by private, community-based human services nonprofits that have contracts with the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, Executive Office of Elder Affairs and Department of Housing and Community Development to provide services.

For more information:

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