

For Immediate Release

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Massachusetts Legal Services Organizations Celebrate the Banning of Renter-Paid Broker's Fees

BOSTON, MA (July 7, 2025) – The Massachusetts Law Reform Institute (MLRI) and Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS) applaud the Legislature's proposal that bans the practice of requiring renters to pay broker's fees when they have not hired a broker themselves. This long-overdue reform, included in the Fiscal Year 2026 state budget, will make accessing housing more affordable for thousands of Massachusetts renters.

For years, MLRI and GBLS have advocated together to eliminate mandatory renter-paid broker's fees, which have forced tenants to pay thousands of dollars in up-front costs just to secure a home. These fees, often amounting to one month's rent, have been a significant barrier for low- and moderate-income families, young people, and seniors across the Commonwealth.

"This new law is a victory for renters and will provide much needed relief for those who need it most," said **Mark Martinez, housing attorney at MLRI**. "No one should have to pay for a service they did not request, or be trapped into rents they can no longer afford because of it, especially when the cost of housing is already out of reach for so many. We are proud to have worked alongside our partners and legislative champions to make this reform a reality."

"Families shouldn't have to pay just to apply for housing," said **Todd Kaplan, senior attorney at GBLS**. "If the landlord hires the broker, the landlord should pay the fee. This law helps remove yet another barrier to affordable housing."

Impact on Massachusetts Renters

- **Immediate Relief:** The law will take effect on August 1, 2025, ensuring that renters will no longer be required to pay broker's fees unless they themselves hire a broker.
- **Lower Barriers:** By shifting the responsibility for broker's fees to the party who hires the broker—typically the landlord—this law will reduce the up-front costs of moving and help keep more families stably housed.
- **Equity and Fairness:** The reform addresses a longstanding inequity in the rental market, making it easier for low-income and working-class residents to access safe, affordable housing.

MLRI and GBLS worked in close partnership, alongside a broad coalition of advocates, lawmakers, and impacted communities, to ensure that the voices of renters were heard

throughout the legislative process. This victory is a testament to the power of collaboration and the importance of centering the needs of those most affected by housing insecurity.

While this policy change will help countless people battle the absurdly high cost of moving in Massachusetts, it will not help create more affordable housing, stabilize rents or protect tenants from displacement. We applaud the legislature for passing this reform and the Governor for signing it into law. We are looking forward to continuing to work with the legislature on additional policies like rent stabilization, regulation of other rental junk fees, and the real estate transfer fee to comprehensively tackle the affordable housing crisis and protect tenants.

"We applaud Massachusetts for taking this important step to protect renters from broker's fees that can add thousands of dollars to the cost of leasing a new apartment," said **April Kuehnhoff, senior attorney at the National Consumer Law Center (NCLC)**. "Additionally, we urge the Massachusetts Legislature to enact H.1553/ S.984: An Act to Regulate Junk Fees in Rental Housing to further protect Massachusetts renters from abusive rental junk fees that further inflate the cost of housing."

While the elimination of renter-paid broker's fees is a significant step forward, the Massachusetts Legal Services community remains committed to advancing policies that promote housing stability, affordability, and equity for all Massachusetts residents. We will continue to advocate for reforms that protect tenants from unfair costs and ensure that everyone has access to a safe and affordable home.

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About Massachusetts Law Reform Institute (MLRI)

Founded in 1968, Massachusetts Law Reform Institute (MLRI) is a nonprofit poverty law and policy program that provides statewide advocacy and leadership in advancing laws, policies, and practices that secure economic, racial, and social justice for low-income people and communities. To learn more, visit [MLRI.org](https://mlri.org).

About Greater Boston Legal Services (GBLS)

GBLS assists survivors of domestic violence, homeless families, elders, people with disabilities, homeowners facing foreclosure, tenants facing eviction, low-wage workers, families with no source of income, and immigrants facing persecution. Annually, GBLS provides legal assistance to more than 12,000 families and individuals who live at or below 125% of the federal poverty standard. GBLS also provides legal counsel to dozens of community-based groups and organizations and conducts strategic impact advocacy to bring about positive systematic change throughout the region and state. For more information, please visit www.gbls.org.