Advocacy for Policy Change

Brandeis students work to reform Massachusetts law

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Norbert Weissberg and Judith Schneider at “Present and Defend: Projects from Advocacy for Policy Change,” April 2011.

For more information about the projects in this report, visit www.brandeis.edu/ethics/atbrandeis/advocacy

To learn about ENACT: The Educational Network for Active Civic Transformation, and to sign up for updates, visit go.brandeis.edu/ENACT

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Advocacy for Policy Change: Brandeis students work to reform Massachusetts law
Introduction

Melissa Stimell

In the spring semester of the 2009-10 academic year I embarked on an experiment with 13 dedicated Brandeis University undergraduate students and the logistical, financial and intellectual support of the International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life, and the Legal Studies Program at Brandeis University. Together we created “Advocacy for Policy Change.”

This course combines an investigation of the ethical dilemmas that arise in the process of lawmaking with hands-on advocacy work at the state level. Students are encouraged to think deeply about the complexities of shaping laws for constituents who hold diverse viewpoints about what is right and good for society and how to best progress through the legislative process. Students choose existing laws they feel could be credibly challenged on ethical or moral grounds, and advocate for state legislative change.

Now in its seventh year, “Advocacy for Policy Change” is dedicated to the creation of citizen advocates: individuals prepared and motivated to create a just society through legislative advocacy. In 2016, we anointed 24 citizen advocates for such issues as pay equity for women, climate change, and healthcare for women and homeless youth.

Working in teams, the students research their chosen issues and design and implement models of legislative advocacy. State legislators and advocacy organizations advise each team to help them understand the lawmaking process, connect with colleagues, and set realistic goals. Each student completes a series of assignments related to their project, in formats relevant to advocacy work, such as an “elevator speech,” an op-ed, and a short video. (The full list of assignments is on page six.) This anthology contains excerpts from these assignments for each project, updates on the bills and budgetary line items, and links to more information on the relevant issues or organizations.

Once again, I must thank several people whose support over the past seven years has been invaluable. This course would not exist without the ongoing support of Professor Richard Gaskins, my mentor and the Director of the Legal Studies Program. He and Daniel Terris, Director of the International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life, took the kernel of a unique idea and made it a reality. Massachusetts State Representative and Ethics Center Board member Jay Kaufman ’68, MA ’73 helped me create a course worthy of Brandeis University. An expanding list of exceptional teaching assistants made the course a reality: David Duhalde, Andrew Hart, Roz Kabrhel, Melissa Ross, Doug Smith, and Cynthia Tschampl.

This course is part of a new national program based at Brandeis University, called ENACT: The Educational Network for Active Civic Transformation. In May, the Ethics Center welcomed the inaugural cohort of 15 ENACT Faculty Fellows to Brandeis for a five-day institute. This fall the Fellows begin teaching their ENACT courses at colleges and universities in or near state capitals across the US. Students in ENACT courses, like those in Advocacy for Policy Change, will learn how to work with community organizations, state legislators and legislative staff members to advance policy.
ENACT will be a major voice in addressing challenges to American democracy by engaging young people around the country in civic activism built on knowledge, cooperation, justice and integrity. This initiative and the national expansion are supported by generous multi-year commitments from International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life International Advisory Board member Norbert Weissberg and his wife, former Board member Judith Schneider, to whom the students and I are very grateful. For more information, see go.brandeis.edu/ENACT.

Brandeis University students are committed to combining academic rigor with hands-on work in pursuit of social justice. Each year a new cohort of advocacy students develops skills that will serve them far beyond one semester. We look forward to supporting the next cohort of inspirational citizen advocates through the seventh year of Advocacy for Policy Change at Brandeis University and the national expansion of ENACT.

Melissa Stimell
Academic Director, ENACT: The Educational Network for Active Civic Transformation
Professor of the Practice in Legal Studies
Chair, Social Justice and Social Policy Program
Director of Internships, Legal Studies Program
The wonderfully engaged, bright, and energetic students in the “Advocacy for Policy Change” course bring new ideas and new energy to public policymaking.

Grounded in a realistic look at what it takes to advocate for and make significant change in the public arena, they dig into difficult “real world” problems and meaningfully interact with the state’s change agents and would-be (or should-be) change agents.

I have no doubt that their probing questions, insights and ideas have made me a better legislator, and help make for better policy in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

As a Brandeis University alum, I am particularly gratified to have had the opportunity over the past seven years to help establish and nurture this valuable course, which continues the Brandeis tradition of active engagement with the pressing issues of the time.

I am honored to now also serve as the Distinguished Legislator for ENACT: The Educational Network for Active Civic Transformation, a national expansion of the important work we have been doing at Brandeis University. We’ve created a great model here at Brandeis and the Massachusetts State House that is now inspiring and supporting engaged citizens across the nation. The network of students, faculty, activists and legislators we are building in ENACT is more important than ever, and I am excited to be a part of its growth and development.

In 2016 Jay Kaufman joined the International Advisory Board of the International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life.
The reports in this volume are excerpted from the material required of each student team in “Advocacy for Policy Change” (Legal Studies 161b) in Spring 2016. The assignments were designed to develop and demonstrate the students’ understanding of the issues and the advocacy process.

**Storybook**
One of the most crucial components of the advocacy process is the sharing of personal stories. For this assignment, students were directed to connect with individuals impacted by their issues and collect and recount their stories.

**Research Report**
The legislative research report is an in-depth document containing facts and analysis of the bill or budget item that a legislator or staffer can reference during the legislative process.

**Elevator Speech**
A prepared advocate should be able to give someone a general idea of the issue and a plan of action within about 30 seconds – the time it takes to ride an elevator. Students were instructed to imagine riding an elevator or walking a hallway at the State House with a legislator or aide.

**Letter to the Legislator**
Ten handwritten (or typed) letters to a legislator have more impact on him or her than 100 emails. The main purposes of this letter to the legislator are to convey that constituents are watching his or her actions on an issue, and to recommend a legislative course of action.

**Script for an In-Depth Meeting with House Ways and Means Staff**
All bills pass through the House Ways and Means Committee for an analysis of their impact on the state budget. For this assignment, students were to write up an accessible and personalized speech to be given in a 5-10 minute meeting with the chair of the House Ways and Means Committee.

**Campaign Journal**
The campaign journal was an opportunity for students to reflect upon at least two substantive meetings with coalition organizations or policymakers.

**Op-Ed**
The op-ed section of The Boston Globe presents a wide array of opinions from community members. Students wrote their own op-ed pieces, sharing their opinions on their advocacy issues in 750 words or less.

**Advocacy Video**
Using either original footage or existing YouTube films, students created “media mash-ups” to present their issues through video.

**Final Oral Presentation: “Present and Defend”**
Bringing everything together, on April 19th, 2016, students gave brief oral presentations of their legislative advocacy projects and responded to questions from audience members.
In modern society, there is no longer an educational gap between men and women that once existed in the history of The United States. All genders have the same opportunity of education and employment within successful careers of their choosing. There is absolutely no reason a worker of one gender should receive any less compensation than any worker for the exact same position. The bill rests on the foundation of three main initiatives: a definition of “comparable work” to fairly assess salary inequality between employees, the inability for an employer to inquire about past salaries as an influencing factor in the hiring decision and the illegality of firing any employee for disclosing their salary to another employee.

**The Bill**

S.2119: An Act to establish pay equity

**Elevator Speech**

Our names are Sara Pipe-Mazo and Waiin Cheang and we are currently students at Brandeis University working with the Equal Pay Coalition. As two women graduating with business degrees from Brandeis University we will be entering the workforce at a disadvantage under the wage laws today. Currently, in the state of Massachusetts women are making a mere $0.82 to their male counterparts in comparable positions. The means to pay off our student loans, our rent, our necessities, we only have 82% of the funds that we should. That is as if we are received an 18% tax for being women. By creating guidelines to define comparable work and imposing higher financial and legal consequences for companies violating equal pay policies, we can ensure that households are bringing home the deserved amount of income to support families in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. We will have proper channels to advocate for our deserved pay and receive up to three-year retroactive compensation — compensation that should have been ours from the beginning. You as a legislator have the ability to grant nearly half of the workforce, and us, the salaries we have worked hard to deserve. When Bill S.2119 comes
to vote in the House of Representatives, vote favorably as your Senate counterparts have and diminish the inequitable wage gap.

**Letter to the Legislator**

I am a current student at Brandeis University working with the Equal Pay Coalition along with my partner, Sara Pipemazo. I am not just any person, but one of your constituents, a person who relies on you as my voice in the House of Representatives. As a woman graduating with a business degree from Brandeis University, I will be entering the workforce at a disadvantage under the current wage laws today.

Currently, in the State of Massachusetts women make approximately 82% to their male counterparts in comparable positions. That means to pay off my student loans, to pay for my bills and my cost of living, I will only have 82% of the resources that I should. In the competitive economy today, this is not just a wage gap that will exist in my first job, but it’ll follow me throughout my career.

Bill S.2119 An Act to establish pay equity is the only solution to remedy pay discrimination in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In order to do so the bill outlines the following provisions:

- Providing a definition of comparable work and encouraging employers to conduct internal reviews of their payroll
- Preventing employers from asking people about their salary history
- Protecting employees from termination for disclosing their compensation.
- Imposing higher financial consequences for employers violating the policies

The policies above can ensure that households in your jurisdiction and in the entire state of Massachusetts are receiving compensation they deserve to support their families. No woman, no mother, no wife and no child deserve less than another simply because of a patriarchal business society. With this legislation, we will have the proper channels to fight for our equality in the workforce and to fight for retroactive compensation for erroneous actions that violate these laws.

How can you as a legislator ensure that your constituents, like me, have a fair chance in our careers? We urge you to vote favorably as your Senate counterparts unanimously have when the bill comes to vote in the House of Representatives.

**House Ways and Means Script**

We stand before you today not just as two students, but also as two residents of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts who have entrusted you to protect our interests and well-being as your constituents. As women graduating with business degrees from Brandeis University, it pains us to understand that we are entering the workforce at a disadvantage. Why you ask? Simply because of our gender—something to which we were born and over which we have no control.

Currently, in the State of Massachusetts women make approximately 82% to their male counterparts in comparable positions, with African-American women earning 66% and Latina women 54%. These statistics show that in some professions women barely make one half of men in similar roles. That is why we stand here before you today asking for your support of Bill S.2119 An Act to establish pay equity. This legislation is the only solution to remedy erroneous pay discrimination in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Bill S.2119 outlines a clear three-part solution to the problem of pay inequity. The first solution is that bill defines “comparable work” and encourages internal audits to guarantee rightful compensation based on industry standards. With the proper definition, it inhibits employers from the ability to circumvent prosecution based on job description or duties that both men and women may perform, but differ slightly in semantics. The internal audit component ensures that even if the employees work in different departments of large corporations, the departmental compensation is aligned with “comparable work” across the company as a whole.

The second solution is that employers are prohibited from inquiring about past salaries during the new-hire interview process. If it is believed that a worker has made less in a previous job than she should have, it could encourage new employers to continue to pay female workers less than the going rate due to lack of knowing any differently. On the contrary, discovery of higher salaries may dissuade an employer from hiring a particular candidate if said employer is unwilling to pay an equal salary.

Lastly, the legislation prohibits employers to terminate employment due to the disclosure of salary to their colleagues and co-workers. The ability for employees to openly communicate about wages, without fear of being fired, is crucial in the battle to ensure that wage disparity is eliminated from the workplace. If employees fear discussing the details, it may never be proven that two employees of “comparable” positions are, in fact, making different salaries due to gender discrimination.

Some may argue that there are potential unintended consequences of the bill stemming from the difficulty of establishing merit-based and gender discriminatory pay differentiation. Senator Karen Spilka defends the legislation
and ensures that: “Variations in pay may exist for comparable work if the difference is based on a bona fide merit system, a system that measures earnings based on production or sales, differences based on geographic location or education, training or experience reasonably related to the particular job.” The bill is not arguing against merit-based salary increases, it is arguing for these differentiations to be just and independent of suppressive gender roles in the workplace.

As it currently stands, this bill is one of the few “revenue neutral” bills that exist in legislation today. There are hefty monetary fines in place; however, the government is not responsible for paying for the legal fees associated with pay equity claims. It is the responsibility of the company to cover all legal fees involved in these situations, including those of the courts, payable to the Commonwealth. In fact, the internal audit provision within the bill aims to save the Commonwealth from lengthy gender discrimination suits and allow for resources to be allocated to other pressing issues at hand.

To add a final quote from Senator Spilka: “if no additional action is taken, it would be another 42 years before men and women were paid equally.” By that time, we would be 62 years old, nearing the age of retirement when we finally receive the compensation we deserve, if this bill does not go into effect. Please don't let us be the victims of pay inequity for the entirety of our careers. We urge you to vote this bill favorably out of committee and grant us, and the rest of your constituents, the equality we deserve.

■ Excerpts from Campaign Journals

Waiin

One of the difficulties we had for the project was looking for stories. We all know that stories or someone’s experience create emotional impact. A good story will help people understand problems easily. At first, we tried to look for story from Brandeis students. But it was hard to look for a good story because we all worked at the entry level which everyone’s compensation is the same.

Sara

When the bill discusses comparable work, the story of AnneMarie Duchon has been so incredibly helpful in my lobbying efforts. Representatives try to escape the conversation because being against pay equity is a poor political move, so they say there’s no way to compare. AnnMarie and her male counterpart went to the same undergraduate college, were RAs together, graduated on the same day with the same major and GPA, started working in the same office on the same day and both were promoted on the same day to their current positions. As AnnMarie said, “it’s not apples and oranges”. There is no way to deny that they were engaged in comparable work. Her story is a clear-cut example of wage disparity.

What I expected to be a 10 minute short meeting, as I experienced during Equal Pay Lobby Day, we spoke with Michael, a legislative aide for Representative Rogers, for over an hour before having to excuse ourselves for another meeting. This was the first time someone in the legislation spoke frankly to us about the legislation. Not only did he address the primary reasons to support the bill, but explained the politics behind a bill like this and introduced us to AIM, a lobbying agency that opposes the bill. He was frank in that nobody will outright say that they don't believe in pay equity so we shouldn't be looking for opposition to the bill, but more apprehensive supporters and how to make them more active in the bill process. He also discussed how to frame certain statistics and buzz words when we talk to politicians and how they may counter what we have to say. Overall, in terms of lobbying and the specificities of the process, I think this was one of the most helpful meetings throughout the semester.

■ Op-Ed

Waiin

Every Woman Deserves Equal Pay (edited version)

On March 31st, members of the United States women's national soccer team filed a federal complaint alleging wage discrimination, saying they are paid far less than their male counterparts. In 2014, the men's team earned a total of $9 million for losing in Round of 16, while the women's team got only $2 million for winning their entire tournament.

What the pay equity in Massachusetts? On January 28, 2016, Bill S2119, An Act to Establish Pay Equity passed unanimously in the Senate. This bill aims to close the gender wage gap by ensuring equal pay for comparable work, establishing pay transparency, and requiring fairness in hiring process.

Prior to this legislation Massachusetts was a pioneer in pay equity since it was the first states to establish for equal pay, the Massachusetts Equal Pay Act was passed in 1945. Eighteen years after the legislation, the federal Equal Pay Act was passed resulting in equal pay as federally mandated requirement and law in 1963.

However, in Massachusetts, 42 years after the federal law passed. The disparities still exist. Women are earning 82 percent of what men earn for the same position, and that gap increases for minorities. Latino women earn 54 cents and African America women earn 66 cents for every dollar earned by men.
In historical parlance, the discount of women’s labor was decided because women were less educated and working just for “pin money”. In fact, this scenario does not exist anymore. As of 2013, 40% of household with children under 18 included a mother serving the primary provider for the their families. The “family logistic” problem that women did not need to be protected so much is not the case anymore. Also, younger women are receiving the same level of education as their male counterparts; the occupation choices for females, are more diverse than our earlier generations. Women are employed in managerial, professional, technical and administrative support positions. At some engineering colleges, like Massachusetts Institute of Technology and California Institute of Technology, women are admitted at a higher rate than men (8% higher in the former and 10% in the latter). And yet, the gender pay gap is 90 cents for younger, white, college-educated worker at the beginning of their career after controlling for education level and hours worked, according to Harvard economist Claudia Godin. Women still earn less when they are not less educated compared to their male co-workers.

The legislation is not asking women to be paid more but the same amount as men. Some people, like Mark Gallagher, the executive vice president of the Massachusetts High Technology Council, argue it would make it harder for companies to do business in Massachusetts. Should the companies deprive women from compensation to make them easier to operate their business while women are working as hard as their male counterparts? Of course not. Being a female should not put someone at disadvantage when she negotiates for her salary.

Groups also argue that the state law passed in 1945 and the federal law passed 1963 already prohibit gender-based discrimination in salaries and hiring. Those groups believe there is no need for this bill. However, it has been almost fifty years since the federal law passed and we clearly need to update the bill. The latest version provides the definition of comparable work and prohibits employers from asking the salary history of the candidates. This bill is encouraging pay equity rather than mandating salary reviews by gender.

Who wins by having practice of unequal pay? Only the corporations and the businesses. The families of any female worker lose income and the government also loses tax.

Karen Spilka, sponsor of the bill with Patricia Jehlen, said, “If no additional action is taken, it would be another 42 years before men and women were paid equally.” The existing laws are not enough to protect compensation and to guarantee competitiveness of women. Such exploitation of women is happening every day. These discriminative situations should be ended now.

Do you want the corporations to keep exploiting your families? Do you want your daughter to be paid less because of her gender regardless of career and educational level? Even though this bill would be another complexity to businesses, we have to do something to end this unfair scenario. Contact your representative now and ask them to vote favorably for this bill! Remember that this bill is for all the families in Massachusetts.

Sara

*We Run The World: Pay Us Accordingly*

In my childhood I continuously encountered the encouragement that I could be anything I wanted to be when I grew up. I could be an astronaut, a firewoman or the first female President of The United States. Nearly a decade later the optimism of a female president has come to fruition. In this amazing feat for the female gender, imagine if Hillary Clinton wins the election. Imagine if we truly do have our next female president. Now imagine telling her that despite making history, despite rising above the competition, Hillary Clinton will only make 82 percent of what Barack Obama made.

She might respond by only doing 82 percent of the work of Barack Obama. That would make it fair. There’s an arms race in North Korea? No can-do, the president used up all 82 percent of her work for the day, so that will have to wait for tomorrow.

Hillary would not be the only woman in this country receiving inequitable wages for comparable work. The women’s national soccer team is currently suing the National League over disputes of pay inequity. Sure, they may “play like girls”; however, in today’s world, playing like a girl attributes to being the first in the world, but being paid nearly 40% less than the other “boys” in the game.

The women’s national soccer league has one three World Cups. The men’s national soccer team is ranked 30th in the world. The only cups in the men’s soccer team are of a protective nature.

So why are they making more than the women’s team if they are clearly the lesser of the two teams? Do they play more games? Do they generate more revenue? Neither. The women’s national team plays more games than the men’s and provides nearly $20 million more in revenue. They are not paid less for any logical reason. They are paid less because they are women.

Outside of the public sphere, residents of Massachusetts are facing equally inequitable pay discrimination. White women in Massachusetts make 82 cents, African-American women make 66 cents and Latina women make 54 cents of every dollar that a man earns.
Women who are engaged in comparable work to their male counterparts are making less every single day; however, employers find this acceptable. Women have their husbands to support the family, their wages are just "extras". There are only 40 percent of households in Massachusetts where mothers are the primary provider for the family. Additionally, it would be unheard of, especially in Massachusetts, for there to be two women in a household instead of a man and a woman.

Many may argue that women have fewer expenses in general, so it evens out. It is not like there are expenses specifically targeting women, like a tampon tax or anything of that nature. Time and time again women are stagnated in society for no other reason than their gender identity. It doesn't matter if they might be more qualified and more competent.

From a janitor to the President of the United States, women are making strides every single day. No matter how far they stride, or how long they kick, they are at a disadvantage in the workforce. This is the 21st century and blatant discrimination should no longer be tolerated.

I wasn't told that I could be 82 percent of what I wanted to be growing up. Hillary Clinton won't do just 82 percent of her job. The women's national league won't score 82 percent less goals. It is time for employers to stop valuing us any differently. According to top female artist and icon, Beyoncé, “we run the world” and it's about damn time that we start being paid that way.

Sara Pipe-Mazo is a junior at Brandeis University majoring in Business concentrating in Accounting and minoring in Legal Studies, Economics and Near Eastern and Judaic Studies.

■ Update
On August 1, 2016, the bill was adopted and signed by Governor Baker.

For more information
View the Bill:
malegislature.gov/Bills/189/Senate/S2119
Equal Pay Coalition:
maequalpaycoalition.com
Higher Education for Students with Disabilities

Implementing community education programs tailored to those with intellectual and developmental disabilities

Melanie Kaplan-Cohen '17
Chantal Tepper '18

In the 21st century having a college degree is necessary in order to compete for jobs and be successful in life; however, many students with disabilities are currently unable to earn a degree because of a lack of inclusive programs in Massachusetts. This bill would enable students who traditionally face challenges in attaining higher education to attend classes and work towards earning college credit and possibly a degree. By passing this bill, Massachusetts will demonstrate its commitment to helping those with disabilities receive continuing education to have a better chance at gaining employment and successful future careers.

The Bill
H. 4040: An Act creating higher education opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and other developmental disabilities

Elevator Speech
Our names are Chantal Tepper and Melanie Kaplan-Cohen and we are students at Brandeis University who are very fortunate to have many incredible academic resources available to us. However, too many students do not have the same opportunity to participate in the higher education experience. We want to ensure that all students who would like to extend their academic endeavors past high school should have the opportunity to do so. The great state of Massachusetts is known for its excellent school system and dedication to helping students achieve their educational goals. Our state is currently ranked number one in the nation for best K-12 public school system. (This does not take into account inequalities among districts.) However, Massachusetts is currently lacking programs to enable students with disabilities to participate in the higher education experience, which limits their future opportunities and prevents them from reaching their full potential. In response to this issue, Bill H4040, aims to remove barriers that prevent students with disabilities from attending college and creates support services to enable the maximum possible integration and success of these students taking classes with non-disabled peers. Furthermore, the bill will monitor participants’ educational achievements and
assist these individuals in obtaining jobs that will make them feel more empowered and independent in the long run. This will decrease the number of limited public tax dollars that will be spent on their well-being. Bill H.4040 was recently reported favorably out of the Higher Education Committee and is currently being reviewed by the Ways and Means Committee. Please show your support for students with disabilities by speaking to members of this committee and urging them to vote it favorably out of committee!

**Letter to the Legislator**

We are students at Brandeis University who are very fortunate to attend a college that provides many academic resources and opportunities. We advocate on behalf of social justice issues and want to ensure that all students have the same opportunities as we do to participate in higher education. However, many students in the state of Massachusetts unfortunately are unable to attend college because of factors outside of their control. Bill H.4040, which creates higher education opportunities for students with disabilities, is of paramount interest to us because we strongly believe that these students deserve the right to take classes at state universities with the supports necessary to help them succeed. As you were named one of nine commissioners on the National Education Commission on Time and Learning, we imagine that you can understand the importance of this issue as it contributes to expanding educational opportunities for all.

By not supporting this bill, the government of Massachusetts would be closing the door on future opportunities for these students. For example, a friend of ours from Weymouth, MA, who has a severe learning disability, is stuck in a bad situation because he has finished high school but does not have any resources available to assist him with further academic endeavors. He wants to do something productive with his life, but says he doesn’t know where to start - he feels lost and neglected by the state that provided him so much support in kindergarten through twelfth grade but then left him on his own after he graduated.

Massachusetts is known for its excellent school system and dedication to helping students achieve their educational goals; however, inclusive programs dry up for disabled students after they complete twelfth grade. The great educational resources that this state has worked so hard to create should be available to all, and the fact they are not available for disabled individuals is shameful and unjust. Many of these students are working as hard as they possibly can, but they are set back by their disability. Individuals with disabilities are willing and able to pursue higher education, and can prosper given the opportunity and the right support.

Bill 4040 will have a largely beneficial impact on society; but to achieve this, it costs money. These grants will come from state funds, which will inevitably create some public opposition. However, the tax money being used will create a more productive society by adding workers to the labor force and expanding education. Furthermore, these new educational opportunities will help disabled people become financially independent in the long run, which will actually save a significant amount of public tax dollars that would have otherwise been spent on their living needs. Not only can they productively hold positions in the labor force, but also they can also support themselves and will not rely as much on government assistance.

We strongly urge you to support bill H.4040—a bill that will change lives like our friend’s. Please talk to members of the House Ways and Means Committee and ask them to vote it favorably out of committee.

Thank you for your consideration of our viewpoint on this matter.

**House Ways and Means Script**

Thank you so much for taking the time to meet with us. As college students at Brandeis University, we are here to talk to you about an issue that is very important to us: ensuring that all students in the state have the opportunity to achieve to their full potential. As you may know, Massachusetts is celebrated for its excellent school system and commitment to helping students excel in education, making the state a national leader. However, there is a lot more work that needs to be done so that all students continue to have the opportunities and resources to enable them to achieve a brighter future. In particular, we would like to guarantee that students with disabilities – who benefit greatly from educational accommodations in grades K-12 – don’t lose this support after high school if they are willing and able to pursue higher education. And they are. Our friend from Weymouth, MA, who has a severe learning disability, is currently stuck in academic “limbo” because he has finished high school but does not have any resources available to assist him with further academic endeavors. He wants to do something productive with his life, but says he doesn’t know where to start. He feels lost and neglected by the state that supported him through high school but then left him on his own after he graduated, even though he worked hard to overcome the challenges caused by his disability.

Many students like him do not even consider applying to college because they do not believe they would get accepted and would not be able to integrate successfully into student life. Thus, they do not go to college, and their future opportunities are severely limited as a result. According to
Melanie scheduled this meeting because as Brandeis students, we are session so we were a bit nervous walking into the office. We This was our first scheduled meeting during our first lobbying took place in Stanley’s office at the State House in Boston. Legislative Director for Representative Thomas Stanley, which Chantal and I attended a meeting with Mark Phillips, Q create a more sustainable and educated society for all. committee to allow these students to go to college, which will have on students with disabilities; the possibilities for the dependent on the government. While the program costs money, the opportunities it creates will help disabled people become financially independent, which will actually save a significant amount of public tax dollars that would have otherwise been spent on their living needs. In this case, not only can they productively hold positions in the labor force, but also they can also support themselves and will not rely as much on government assistance.

We strongly support this bill and the positive impacts it will have on students with disabilities; the possibilities for the future successes of disabled students are endless if given the right support. Please vote bill H.4040 favorably out of your committee to allow these students to go to college, which will create a more sustainable and educated society for all.

■ Excerpts from Campaign Journals

Melanie

Chantal and I attended a meeting with Mark Phillips, Legislative Director for Representative Thomas Stanley, which took place in Stanley’s office at the State House in Boston. This was our first scheduled meeting during our first lobbying session so we were a bit nervous walking into the office. We scheduled this meeting because as Brandeis students, we are residents of Waltham, and thus constituents of Representative Stanley’s district. He is also a member of the House Ways and Means Committee, where our bill currently is located. When we arrived at the office, Mr. Phillips met us and we went into Stanley’s office. Chantal and I talked about the importance of education, the needs of disabled students, and how this legislation addresses those issues, and that we would like the Representative to push this bill forward in the Ways and Means Committee. He asked us a few questions, which we were able to answer, and then at the end told us that he would talk to Representative Stanley about the bill. ...

Chantal and I went to the MAC office in Boston to meet with Johanne, who we had been in contact with via email for about a month. Massachusetts Advocates for Children is an organization that works to help children who face barriers to education and life opportunities, especially those with intellectual disabilities and autism. We chose to work with this coalition because they have been strong supporters of the bill and other related legislation. …We talked to her about our interest in the bill, some of our past advocacy efforts, and what we were planning to do in the future. She was very helpful and able to answer our questions about the bill, talked to us about the organization’s advocacy work, and she reviewed our storybook draft that we showed her. Johanne also provided us with some useful documents, including the Task Force Report, fact sheets, and bill summary, and added us to the email campaign list which we could use to ask supporters to send letters to their legislators advocating for the bill. Overall, the meeting went very well and it helped us to develop a connection with Johanne and the organization. Something that contributed to the success of the meeting was our level of preparation (e.g. we had the storybook to show her) and previous communications with Johanne via email, so we were a bit more comfortable going to talk with her in person.

Chantal

I met with Johanne Pino who is the project coordinator at MAC. She was eager to meet with Melanie and me, and was enthusiastic about our project. Prior to this meeting, I had arranged a list of questions I had for her, one of which was “who are the biggest opponents of Bill H1064, and how does MAC respond to legislative negativity?” Johanne was pleased to tell us that she does not know of any person or organization that openly opposes this bill, and that MAC does not get any complaints or negative publicity.

The coalition also helps students with disabilities find jobs and attempts to create partnerships with educational institutions for inclusive learning. We spoke about [a] mutual friend who has a learning disability, and Johanne gave us the contact information of other special education students who we could talk to, including [someone] who we communicated with via e-mail.
■ Update
On July 31, 2016, the bill was submitted under a new draft, H.4561. As of this publication, this bill is in its third reading for the House Ways and Means Committee.

For more information

View the Bill:
malegislature.gov/Bills/189/House/H4040

Massachusetts Advocates for Children:
massadvocates.org
Family and Medical Leave

Establishing family and medical leave insurance programs

David Burakovsky ’16
Milo Charny-Rosen ’16
Ean Silbar ’17

Currently, under the protections of the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993, eligible employees in the United States are guaranteed the right to take 12 workweeks of unpaid leave during any 12-month period for one of the following reasons: the birth of a child; the placement of child for adoption or foster care; in order to care for the spouse, or child, or parent, of the employee, if such spouse, child or parent has a serious health condition; or because of a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the functions of the employee’s position. Existing legislation does not guarantee workers in Massachusetts the right to paid family medical leave (PFML), and while many workers have access to unpaid leave, most cannot afford to use it. This bill advocates for guaranteed paid leave for eligible employees.

■ The Bill

H.4351: An Act establishing a family and medical leave and temporary disability leave insurance program

■ Elevator Speech

Hello, thank you for taking the time to meet with me today to discuss an issue that is important to me and my fellow citizens. My name is [_______], and as an [Economics and Politics/Economics and Business/HSSP] major at Brandeis University – and future Massachusetts employee – I have a personal stake in the financial security of our communities and future stewardship of the Commonwealth. Currently, over 40 percent of Massachusetts workers are exposed to serious financial risks when faced with family planning and medical emergencies, as they are not protected by existing federal and state legislation. These workers are forced to fall back on a combination of unpaid sick days, vacation time, personal time off, and – most worrisome – credit card debt. This approach is fundamentally flawed. Senate Bill 1008 proposes a solution by pooling together the resources of Massachusetts’ vibrant economy to provide meaningful baseline levels of financial worker protection for family medical leave and temporary disability insurance. The Bill is currently in the Joint Committee on Family and Medical Leave.
on Labor and Workforce Development, and we ask that you urge your colleagues to report favorably. This responsible and forward-looking approach will allow Massachusetts to strengthen its economy and join the ranks of nearly every industrialized nation in the world to once again become a leader in providing a safe, sustainable, and prosperous future for all its citizens.

**Letter to the Legislator**

Dear [Senator/Representative],

As a registered [Waltham/Newton/Massachusetts] voter, I have a vested interest in the financial security of our communities and future stewardship of the state’s economy. Today I am a senior finishing my B.A. in economics and politics at Brandeis University. I am young, healthy, and relatively fit; thankfully, I can say the same for my parents. However, I will soon be entering the Massachusetts workforce, and I would like to responsibly plan for the day when my loved ones and myself might not be as medically fortunate. It is important that we take this forward-looking approach to ensure the protection of all Massachusetts families.

Current federal and state legislation does not guarantee workers in Massachusetts the right to paid family medical leave. When emergencies occur, 1.2 million Massachusetts families – nearly 40 percent of households – face financial burdens and risk losing their jobs if they take time off from work to care for a family medical emergency, or after the birth of a child. These households are forced to fall back on a combination of unpaid sick days, vacation time, personal time off, and – most worrisome – credit card debt. This approach, which likely forces the choice between taking care of a child they love or the job that puts food on the table is both fundamentally flawed and unsustainable.

Senate Bill S. 1008 will provide eligible employees up to 12 weeks of job-protected family medical leave or 26 weeks of temporary disability insurance benefits. Weekly benefits – which are not to exceed $1,000 – are calculated as a portion of an individual’s average weekly income and are allocated using a progressive scale; for example, higher levels of income will receive a lower percentage of average weekly earnings. This legislation will allow employees to take care of themselves and their loved ones, and will protect the economic security of millions of Massachusetts families.

Businesses, despite those who may oppose this legislation, actually stand to benefit from the myriad positive externalities of paid family medical leave and temporary disability insurance. Paid leave policies have been shown to significantly improve worker retention and reduce turnover costs, improve worker morale, and increase productivity. Innovative and industry-leading companies including Google, Microsoft, and Spotify have already recognized the strategic investment in paid family medical leave. It is for these reasons – and numerous more – that many businesses in states with family medical leave and temporary disability insurance laws have reported neutral to favorable financial results.

Senate Bill S. 1008 is currently in the Joint Labor and Workforce Development Committee, and has recently received renewed attention regarding possible funding models. In light of the numerous benefits to Massachusetts employees, families, and businesses, we urge you to (report favorably on this bill/ inform your colleagues on the Labor and Workforce Committee of the importance of a favorable report on this bill.)

**House Ways and Means Script**

As a co-author of numerous economic development acts ranging from environmental innovations to emerging technologies it is clear that you understand the necessity for us to lead on investments that ensure the strength of our state’s economy. Furthermore, wearing the dual professional hats of legislator and insurance broker, I am sure that you see the prudence in responsible future planning, and understand the necessity to pool common resources to provide for that good. For me, as an economics and politics major at Brandeis University – and future Massachusetts employee – I have a personal stake in the financial security of our communities and future stewardship of the Commonwealth, and I would like to participate in that future planning.

As you may be aware, currently, over 40 percent of Massachusetts workers are exposed to serious financial risks when faced with family planning and medical emergencies, as they are not protected by existing federal and state legislation. These workers are forced to fall back on a combination of unpaid sick days, vacation time, personal time off, and – most worrisome – credit card debt. This approach is fundamentally flawed and unsustainable.

Senate Bill 1008, An Act establishing a family and medical leave and temporary disability leave insurance program, would provide a weekly benefit – which is not to exceed $1,000 – for up to 12 calendar weeks for family medical leave and up to 26 weeks for temporary disability. The program employs a progressive scale to determine the percentage of an individual’s weekly wage to be paid as benefit relative to the individual’s weekly income; as the income of the individual rises, the percentage of the weekly income falls.

This legislation would provide myriad positive economic benefits. First and foremost, S1008 would protect the
economic security of millions of Massachusetts families.

More so, paid leave policies have been shown to significantly improve worker retention and reduce turnover costs, improve worker morale, and increase productivity. Furthermore, this legislation would allow smaller businesses to compete on an even playing field with larger businesses. It is for these reasons – and numerous more – that many businesses in states with family medical leave and temporary disability insurance laws have reported neutral to favorable financial results.

Businesses who oppose the legislation may only see the up-front accounting costs while failing to realize the longer term investment opportunity of paid temporary disability and family medical care leave. Similarly, elected officials might fail to view the program's long term benefits to the state’s economy. This legislation will erase the existing competitive disadvantage and allow Massachusetts businesses to compete on an even playing field and grow. In the October 27th Joint Committee hearing, your colleague Rep. Kenneth Gordon (D-Bedford) argued that paid family medical leave would actually “help Massachusetts companies compete with those in California, New Jersey and Rhode Island, which have already approved similar legislation...as a matter of law.” As companies in other states that have led on family medical leave and temporary disability insurance continue to attract top talent – many coming from our state's fine universities – we must act in a big way to protect our economic future.

It is for these reasons that I urge you and your colleagues to vote favorably on S.1008. This legislation addresses a real problem that poses a threat to our businesses, our state's future economic prosperity, and – most importantly – our communities.

Excerpts from Campaign Journals

David

The connections made in this legislative meeting (with the coalition) were critical for us, as they provided inside information which was not accessible elsewhere. This was an additional lesson I learned: to really get involved and understand what is going on with the Bill, you have to attend legislative meetings and talk with those who are spearheading the lobbying efforts, as material published online does not typically provide comprehensive and updated information. I believe the meeting went extremely well and I certainly had a much better understanding of the current status of the Bill after attending.

One thing I immediately realized (in the meeting with Senator Wolf’s staff) was the importance of establishing and maintaining connections. By fostering a healthy relationship with Wolf’s staff we were able to direct technical and detailed questions which they helped us comprehensively answer. Additionally, we were advised as how to best concentrate our lobbying efforts. The staff provided us with names, especially in the House of Representatives, whose support was not yet secured. Furthermore, we were provided hundreds of documents including fact sheets, testimonies, letters of opposition, and other resources which were used to strengthen our lobbying campaign for the Bill.

Milo

Another takeaway I had from this meeting (RiseUp Legislative Meeting) was the importance of team diversity. The organizations in attendance ranged from labor to religious groups; furthermore, the representatives from each organization brought a unique skill set that added value to the overall group. Some representatives were highly technical, and embarked on fascinating dissections of the possible amendments to funding mechanisms, eligibility requirements, and military provisions. Others had a highly nuanced understanding of the media aspect, and focused their efforts towards coordinating the most impactful responses in a variety of scenarios. Finally, the representative from RaiseUP brought incredible leadership qualities, and effectively ran a detail-oriented meeting while maintaining an incredible “30,000 ft view” throughout. I cannot overstate how impressed I was by the collection of skills, and how much each skillset complemented the others.

In the course of lobbying for S.1008 at the State House our team developed a close working relationship with Senator Daniel A. Wolf (D-Harwich) and his legislative team (in particular Director and General Counsel, Anjali Sakaria, and Legislative Advisor, Katie Barry). One of the most important lessons I learned is how vital these relationships are. From our very first visit, we were welcomed into the office and invited to a detailed discussion on the substance and politics surrounding the bill. From that point onwards we were able to direct our most technical and political questions to Sen. Wolf’s office, and were always presented with the most detailed and current information. There are some things you just can’t look up online!

Ean

After the interview we had a much more casual conversation with the Senator Wolf that I found very powerful. He asked us who we were voting for in the upcoming election, and as Brandeis students what our opinion was on the current state of politics in the United States. To my surprise he was extremely candid and even apologized that his generation has made it very difficult for our generation using the examples of student debt, mortgages, and housing inflation. He also mentioned that he would not be running for
re-election as he believed in getting new blood into politics as he has served his terms to the best of his abilities. I could not be more grateful for our experiences in the State House with Senator Wolf and his staff and the work that they did for S.1008.

■ Update
As of this publication, the bill has been reprinted as bill S.2447, and is in the House Committee on Ways and Means.
In the state of Massachusetts, a young pregnant woman may be faced with a difficult decision regarding abortion. If a pregnant minor decides to follow through with the safe and legal medical procedure, she may still face obstacles in the form of governmental intrusion and parental restrictions. Current law states that a minor may have an abortion only if she gets the written consent of a parent or permission from a judge. This bill seeks to address the limits imposed on young women who seek abortions. It would allow for other family members, authorized medical professionals, and the courts to provide consent. This bill also seeks to adjust the age that requires consent from under eighteen years of age to under sixteen years of age.

The Bill
H.2070: An Act to improve healthcare for young women

Elevator Speech
My name is [_______] this is [_______] and we are students at Brandeis University. Thank you for taking the time to meet with us, because we know that through responsible planning we can ensure that young women have the same opportunity as their peers. In Massachusetts, 39 out of every 1,000 young women experience unintended pregnancies yearly. As young women, we know this puts these individuals in a position that changes the trajectory of their lives. A pregnancy impacts many areas of life, most notably, a woman’s educational and financial well-being.

In MA, young women may find that terminating their pregnancy is in the best interest of themselves and their unborn child but they encounter several obstacles when terminating an unintended pregnancy. Women under 18 must get consent from their parents before they can proceed. For most, this is easy to obtain. However, some young women come from unstable or violent homes, making consent not readily available. Their only option is going through the court system, which is daunting and unnecessary. Of the 20,000 young women who have ever gone through the court for consent only 2 were rejected. Going through the courts is both unnecessary and a waste of taxpayer money.
We want to expand consent options for young women which is why we support bill H.2070: An Act to Improve Health Care for Young Women. This bill gives young women 16 and older the ability to consent to terminating their pregnancy. Additionally, women under the age of 16 would be able to get consent from parents or a family member 25 years old or older. They may also get consent from a licensed medical professional who has counseled them on their pregnancy.

By voting this bill favorably out of Public Health committee, you are helping vulnerable young women maintain stable lives, as well as making sure all young women possess the opportunity to pursue their goals.

Letter to the Legislator

We, Megi Belegu and Asisa Isack, are students at Brandeis University. We are reaching out to you because we live in Waltham and want to ensure that all young women in Massachusetts have equal opportunities. Your past work on the Joint Committee on Children, Families, and Persons with Disabilities indicates a concern for issues that affect minors. Additionally, your support of bill S.1114 highlights your interest in providing equal access to healthcare for all individuals.

In the United States, 39 out of every 1,000 young women experience unintended pregnancies yearly. As young women, we know this puts these individuals in a position that changes the trajectory of their lives. A pregnancy impacts many areas of life, most notably, a woman's educational and financial well-being.

Currently, women under the age of 18 encounter obstacles when terminating an unintended pregnancy. They must get consent from their parents before they can proceed in accessing healthcare. For most young women, this is easy to obtain. In states without laws requiring parental consent, studies have found that young women voluntarily go to their parents for support. However, the same studies show that for young women who do not turn to their families, most have good reason not to. Some come from unstable homes that can be filled with sexual, drug, or domestic abuse, making consent not readily available.

The only option for this group of women is going through the court system. Over the past two decades, over 20,000 young women have gone to the courts seeking consent—only 2 have ever been rejected. Going through the court not only delays access to time sensitive health care, but is a waste of taxpayer money.

We want to expand consent options for young women which is why we support bill H.2070: An Act to Improve Health Care for Young Women. This bill lowers the age of consent to 16 years of age. Women under the age of 16 would still need consent from a third party, but would be able to get consent from a family member 25 years old or older. They would also be able to get consent from a licensed medical professional who has counseled them on their pregnancy.

Individuals from right-to-life organizations may feel that allowing these women to have more options will further increase abortion rates. This is simply not supported by any data; States without parental consent laws don't see increased rates of pregnancies. But there are increased rates of women fleeing to other states to get around parental consent laws. Even if a young woman chooses adoption, that child would struggle in the underfunded DCF system which has seen numerous tragedies in recent years. We can all agree that teenage mothers are not able to fully support a child and should not be put in a position where they may be forced to do so.

H.2070 is still being debated in the Public Health Committee and we ask that you talk to your colleagues and ask them to vote the bill out favorably. By asking your colleagues to vote this bill out of committee, you are helping vulnerable young women maintain stable lives, as well as making sure all young women possess the opportunity to pursue their goals.

House Ways and Means Script

Our names are (insert names) and we are students at Brandeis University. Thank you for taking the time to meet with us. We know that through responsible planning we can ensure that young women have the same opportunities as their peers. In Massachusetts, 39 out of every 1,000 young women experience unintended pregnancies yearly. As young women, we know this puts these individuals in a position that changes the trajectory of their lives. A pregnancy impacts many areas of life, most notably, a woman's educational and financial well-being.

In MA, women under the age of 18 encounter several obstacles when terminating an unintended pregnancy. Women under 18 must get consent from their parents before they can proceed. For most, this is easy to obtain. In states without laws requiring parental consent, the American Civil Liberties Union found that most young women voluntarily go to their parents for support. The ACLU found that “90% of minors under 15 involved a parent in their decision to have an abortion.” This clearly demonstrates that the plurality of young women will most likely turn to their parents for support if they find themselves in an unintended pregnancy.
However, the same studies show that for young women who do not turn to their families, most have good reason not to. Our bill targets those young women who come from unstable homes that can be filled with sexual, drug, or domestic abuse, making consent not readily available. These individuals are left with only the option of going through the court system, which is daunting and unnecessary. We know that if we were to have had to navigate the courts while pregnant, 16, and unsupported, we would have struggled. The struggles we would have faced would have been unnecessary because only 2 out of over 20,000 young women who have ever gone to the court for consent were rejected. This option not only delays access to time sensitive health care, but is a waste of taxpayer money.

We want to reduce the amount that MA spends on court fees with fewer unnecessary cases. When a minor goes to court to get consent under the current statute, she can be assigned a lawyer by the state to protect her interests and guide her through the process. This is hours and hours that can be better spent on helping other indigent people, given the limited funding available for public defenders and the Committee for Public Counsel Services. Over $8 million dollars in the budget last year was appropriated for “Indigent Persons Fees and Court Costs.” This year, Gov. Baker proposes to slash that budget to about 15 million, meaning resources will become even more scarce. We must find ways to cut costs in judiciary funding if we want to cut spending. There are people who desperately rely on public defenders in order to get a fair trial. To ensure justice is being served in the state of MA, we must ensure that the limited funding available goes to people who actually need it. Currently, states do not fund abortions for minors. However, states are being negatively affected by the use of taxpayer’s money that goes towards forcing these minors to go through the courts. The delay in access to health care may result in these young women having unintended births. The American Civil Liberties Union found that “the costs associated with childbirth, neonatal and pediatric care greatly exceed the costs of abortion.” We know that a woman under 18 years of age will not be able to support herself and a child without help, and likely to turn to medicaid. Studies have shown that up to 35 percent of Medicaid-eligible women who want abortions, but live in states that do not provide funding for abortion, have been forced to carry their pregnancies to term. A national study by the Brookings Institution in 2001 found that taxpayers pay about $11 billion dollars to cover medical services as a result of unintended pregnancies. If a young woman chooses to put her child up for adoption, the state will face even more costs in shepherding a child through the foster care system. This can all be avoided through responsible planning and supporting An Act to Improve Health Care for Young Women.

Giving pregnant minors the opportunity to terminate their pregnancy allows them to continue their education and work towards solid career goals. Women who experience unintended pregnancies tend to be from lower income households. They need an education in order to lift themselves up, but a pregnancy will stifle a young individual’s chances of even completing high school. We, as young women, studying at Brandeis University, know what Massachusetts has to offer in terms of higher educational institutions. We cannot imagine having the educational opportunity we now have if we had experienced an unintended pregnancy. We want to make sure that MA women can take advantage of higher education in their own state.

We want to expand consent options for young women which is why we support An Act to improve healthcare for young women. Bill H.2070 gives young women 16 and older the ability to consent to terminating their pregnancy. Additionally, women under the age of 16 would be able to get consent from parents or a family member 25 years old or older. They may also get consent from a licensed medical professional who has counseled them on their pregnancy. By voting this bill out of committee, you are helping vulnerable young women maintain stable lives while cutting costs to taxpayers.

■ Excerpts from Campaign Journals

Megi

Some Statehouse meetings were more conversational but many aides we talked [were unfamiliar with this particular bill and they] spent their time listening to us explain. One example of this was our meeting with the aide for Rep. Eric Lesser in his office. He invited us to sit down and listened to us talk, but didn’t ask any questions. Instead he wrote down some information and said he would pass it along. These types of meetings felt the most difficult to gauge because of the lack of back and forth. But they taught me to be able to guide a conversation when the other person is simply listening while you speak. Very often, we lead everyday conversation based on how the other person is reacting so it can be uncomfortable to have a less dynamic conversation. After coming across a few quiet aides, I became much more capable of being able to continue the conversation on my own or with Asisa.

This meeting was a great example of how connections can appear in unexpected places. By having a narrow target of working on only people who had direct access to the bill, I was not open to the idea of talking to Rep. Malia. With a gentle push, Asisa and I found ourselves talking to one of the most receptive aides we had met with. Our connection as women
with experience working on pro-choice bills proved to be important in getting a conversation flowing.

**Asisa**

One challenge that we faced while working on this bill was not working with a coalition that supported our bill. The lack of correspondence received from the coalition we reached out to was disheartening. The absence of a coalition was problematic because it meant we did not have a group to align ourselves with. Since the content of our bill is controversial, an organized coalition’s support could have proven helpful in moving legislators to vote favorably. Additionally, I feel that a coalition would have had access to resources that could have possibly provided us with extensive data, personal stories, and contact with relevant professionals.

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**Update**

On September 26, 2016 the bill was sent to study. It became part of order H.4638 for public health matters with myriad other bills. As of this publication that order is now in the House Committee on Rules.

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**For more information**

View the Bill: malegislature.gov/Bills/189/House/H2070
Treatment for Opioid Addiction

Offering treatment instead of criminal charges for drug users who seek help

Joseph DeFerrari ’18
Danny Kimmel ’17

Drug overdose is the leading cause of accidental death in Massachusetts. The issue is as bad right now as it’s ever been, and nobody knows why. Some speculate that the recession of 2009 led to a hopelessness in some that sparked addiction. The criminal justice system, thus far, has not been successful in its attempts to slow the increase in these preventable deaths. Though there are many drug-users who wish to be treated for their addiction, they are often too afraid of being charged for possession of illegal substances to seek out help. Many want help, but simply don’t know where to turn. This bill would allow current drug users to turn in their drugs to local law enforcement agencies and instead of facing criminal charges, they would attend mandatory rehabilitation programs with higher success rates of remission.

The Bill

H 3993: An act relative to persons seeking drug addiction treatment

Elevator Speech

Hello, and thank you for taking the time to talk to me. I’m a student at Brandeis University, a school famous for its commitment to social justice. This social justice background is a large part of why I’m talking to you today, advocating for a bill that will end an illogical and unjust practice.

There is a bill currently passing through the MA House of Representatives that could help save people from an epidemic that killed 47,055 people nationwide in 2014, and is killing four people every day in our own communities here in the Commonwealth.

Opiate overdose is the leading cause of accidental death in Massachusetts, and nationwide killed 14,380 (44%) more people than car crashes did in 2014. It is concerning to me that these numbers have been sharply rising in recent years, which seems to signify that something we’re doing just isn’t working.

In Gloucester, police are trying something new; they’ve instituted the “Angel Initiative”, an innovative program that allows addicts to come to police stations in good faith to turn in their drugs, and police, instead of charging them, actually help get them into

Joseph DeFerrari ’18 and Danny Kimmel ’17
treatment. That policy has put about two people a day – 400
total – into treatment since its implementation last June.
The bill passing through the legislature now would institute
Gloucester’s policy all across the Commonwealth.

As Brandeis students, we care about this bill because it
will save lives, save money, and also because treating addicts
as people with a serious problem, instead of as criminals, is
the right thing to do. This bill will do all those things, and it
will give Massachusetts the chance to be the first in the nation
to implement this truly innovative policy.

Would the representative speak with members of the
Judiciary Committee in support of Bill H.3993?

Letter to the Legislator
I am writing to you today to advocate for a bill that will end an
illogical and unjust practice. This bill, House number 3993, could help save people from an epidemic that killed 47,055 people nationwide in 2014, and is killing four people every day in our own communities here in the Commonwealth.

Opiate overdose is the leading cause of accidental death in Massachusetts, and nationwide killed 14,380 (44%) more people than car crashes did in 2014. It is concerning to me that these numbers have been sharply rising in recent years, which seems to signify that something we're doing just isn't working.

In Gloucester, police are trying something new; they’ve instituted the “Angel Initiative”, an innovative program that allows addicts to come to police stations in good faith to turn in their drugs, and police, instead of charging them, actually help get them into treatment. That policy has put about two people a day – 400 total – into treatment since its implementation last June. The bill passing through the legislature now would institute Gloucester’s policy all across the Commonwealth.

District attorneys are pushing back, saying that police don’t have the authority to do this.

On the contrary, they do, as Chief Campanello of Gloucester has consistently asserted, have discretionary powers when it comes to arrest. That is why this bill is needed: for more programs like Gloucester’s to be successful, addicts need to know and trust that the police are there to help them.

This bill will equip us with another tool with which to attack this epidemic. We cannot continue to try to incarcerate our way out of a public health crisis, and watching four Massachusetts residents die every day. It doesn't work. I implore you to speak favorably to your colleagues in the Judiciary Committee about this bill.

House Ways and Means Script
My name is [Joe DeFerrari/Danny Kimmel,] and I am
speaking to you today as a student from Brandeis University, a
school famous for its commitment to social justice. This social
justice background is a large part of why I’m talking to you
today, advocating for a bill that will end an illogical and unjust
practice. There is a bill currently passing through the MA
House of Representatives that could help save thousands of
lives right here in our own communities in Massachusetts.

Nationwide, 47,055 people were killed due to a
drug overdose in 2014; an all-time high. By comparison,
auto accidents killed 32,675, about 31% fewer people.
Massachusetts is by no means immune to this national
problem. In fact, the Commonwealth has seen a sharp uptick
in drug-related deaths since the 1990s, and opiate overdose is
now the leading cause of accidental death in Massachusetts,
killing an average of 4 people a day. Both Governor Deval
Patrick and Governor Charlie Baker have declared the opioid
crisis a public health emergency since 2014.

This bill is trying something new. The idea for the
legislation comes from Gloucester MA’s police department.
In June of 2015, it launched the ANGEL program, aka the
Gloucester Initiative. Under than new policy, if someone
comes into the Gloucester Police Department looking for help
with a drug addiction, instead of being charged, they can turn
in their drug paraphernalia, and an officer will help get them
into a treatment facility.

As of February 11th 2016, Gloucester’s program has
put over 400 people into drug rehabilitation since its
implementation in June of 2015.

So far, 60 police departments in 17 states have
implemented programs modeled after Gloucester’s Angel
Initiative. More than 20 of those are in Massachusetts. “Chiefs
from Scarborough, Me.; Cooperstown, N.Y.; Lodi, Ohio; and
Rolling Meadows, Ill., among others, have sought his advice
as they duplicated his program”. Over a hundred more across
the nation are preparing to launch similar initiatives.

In addition to saving lives, the bill should also save
significant money. The Gloucester Police Department spends
about $55 per person processed through the Angel Initiative,
a number lower than it could be thanks to local pharmacies,
taxi companies, and ambulance services offering significant
discounts. In contrast, it costs $220 to arrest, process, and
hold an addict in custody for a day. A portion of the costs
are handled by PAARIUSA, which has raised hundreds of
thousands of dollars and has received millions in in-kind
contributions. The rest of the program's expenses are paid for
by the department’s drug seizure account, which is funded by
money taken from arrested drug dealers.
Police departments across the nation are supporting the bill. Many times police officers end up arresting the same people over and over on the same drug charges. This is because putting people through the criminal justice system who are addicted to substances does not treat their addiction. As Senator Ken Donnelly of Arlington said, “We are in a public health crisis. We’re not going to arrest our way out of it, and we’re not going to incarcerate our way out of it. Forget the war on drugs, we need a war on opiate addiction”.

District attorneys have provided the strongest opposition to the bill. Multiple have argued 1.) that police simply do not have the authority to offer amnesty for the crime of heroin possession; 2.) that selective enforcement of the law is a violation of the rights of other offenders; 3.) that this has the potential to complicate criminal cases; 4.) the offer of amnesty takes away addicts’ incentive to get clean.

Points one and two can be answered with the same note: police, as Campanello and others have consistently pointed out, have discretion when it comes to arrests. He said in a Judiciary hearing on March 7th, “discretion is the most powerful tool we have”. There should be no question whether police have the authority to abstain from arresting someone if the cause is just. Nobody’s rights are being violated, as this is just an example of police using their discretionary powers to choose to arrest some people, and to abstain from arresting others.

There should also be little worry about argument three. Perhaps some defense attorneys would try to use the law to their advantage by either a.) claiming that the defendant was on the way to treatment when caught, or b.) trying to use the defendant’s participation in the Angel program to complicate preexisting charges. However, these defenses would be extremely unlikely to succeed. The policy is clearly written, and states that only those physically coming into police departments in good faith can expect immunity. The bill is short, succinct, and very clear. It is doubtful that any judge would allow the law to be manipulated as the district attorneys suggest.

Point four is nonsensical on the face of it. Addicts have seemingly endless motivation to try to get clean, the primary one being health. In addition, the policy, as stated above, only applies to those going to police departments in good faith seeking treatment. Those caught with drugs will still be arrested exactly as they were before. There should be no problem regarding incentive for drug addicts.

Every day we don’t act, another four people in the Commonwealth are dying from drug overdose. We’re facing a very severe public health crisis, and we’re not going to incarcerate our way out of it. We implore the committee to vote favorably on the bill, giving us another tool with which to combat this horrific epidemic. Let the Commonwealth be the first in the nation to have this groundbreaking policy, so we can start sending fewer people to jail and more people to treatment, and start saving more lives.

**Excerpts from Campaign Journals**

**Joseph**

My coalition is Massachusetts Organization for Addiction Recovery (MOAR). I went to a very meaningful meeting in early March. The meeting, to my surprise, often felt as if it was structured more like an AA session than a coalition meeting. Everyone went around the room and told their stories. Some were vague – “hi, I’m ___, I’m three months sober”, for example. Others went into significant detail, not just about their addictions, but also about the costs. Some had lost their jobs. Several talked about girlfriends who left them. One man’s wife walked out on him and took their kids with her. Two mothers had lost sons to addiction. One (not the one I interviewed) had just lost him a few weeks earlier, and cried as she told the basics of her story. Another couple of mothers had children currently battling addiction, and were clearly exasperated and desperate for ways to help.

Their stories were incredibly powerful. When my turn to speak came, I was a little nervous. I almost felt like an intruder, imposing myself in this space as someone who had never really been touched by the disease that had ruined or dramatically altered all these peoples’ lives. However, when I told them that I was here because I was doing work in relation to a bill to be discussed that night, they gave me a warm welcome, almost celebrating me and the work I was doing. I was flattered, and touched that they accepted me there.

After a while, the leader of the coalition took over. She talked about all kinds of current events related to addictions – new Narcan distribution, public speaking events, new medical discoveries. People chimed in eagerly, creating a lively discussion filled with stories. Eventually, the topic turned to my bill. I chose to listen instead of speak. People generally liked the bill, but some people – whose opinions had clearly been informed by their experiences – didn’t like the bill, either because they didn’t trust the good intentions of police from Gloucester and elsewhere, or because they thought that government-mandated rehab was really just well-hidden torture.

**Danny**

My first meeting regarding this bill was with Dr. Sharon Reif, a senior scientist and lecturer at Brandeis’s Heller School for Social Policy and Management. Dr. Reif’s expertise includes substance use disorder so I thought she would be a great person to meet with and discuss the bill. I figured that even if she didn’t know about the bill she would at least be able to tell us who to talk to at the State House as well as suggest
coalitions to contact. ... Overall I thought it was good to talk to Dr. Reif about the bill because she did have interesting insights and was also able to point me in the right direction towards coalitions to contact.

Update

On September 22, 2016 the bill was sent to study, as part of Judiciary study order H.4625. As of this publication the order had been discharged to the House Committee on Rules.

For more information

View the Bill: malegislature.gov/Bills/189/House/H3993

Massachusetts Organization for Addiction Recovery: moar-recovery.org
On February 9, 2015, a case of sexual assault in Boston had the media and public buzzing about the safety of the ride-for-hire industry. Many college students, young professionals and even teenagers rely on apps such as Uber and Lyft as affordable means of transportation. Once the question of safety arose, the demand for regulation on Transportation Network Companies quickly followed. This legislation calls for two-tier background checks to prevent people with certain histories of drug and alcohol abuse or criminal activity from being hired as drivers for these companies.

■ The Bill

H.4064: An act relative to the ride for hire industry

■ Elevator Speech

Our names are Matthew Beaver and Danielle Novotny, and we are students at Brandeis University. We believe that we can ensure the safety of riders in Massachusetts through reasonable regulation of ride-hailing services. In the past year the regulations for ride-hailing companies such as Uber have come under scrutiny in the wake of assault cases involving ride-hailing drivers. We and our fellow college students throughout Massachusetts frequently use Uber to stay safe while traveling through Boston – preventing drunk driving incidents, and traveling safely with a company we can rely upon. The bill requires drivers to have background checks, requires ride hailing services to have a panic button, in case of emergency, in the app, complete passenger reports that catalog the details of the ride, display visible decals for riders’ safety, and have adequate insurance. The current proposed regulations in bill H.4064 on the ride-hailing industry allows for increased safety for consumers while allowing ride-hailing companies to function in a way that allows us to use them. For the safety of riders, especially college students, I implore you to make this bill a priority and vote for this bill favorably as is out of the Senate. Thank you.

■ House Ways and Means Script

My name is Matthew Beaver and I, along with my colleague Danielle Novotny, am a student of Brandeis University and a resident of Waltham. I am writing you because we are advocating for college students who use Transportation Networking Companies, like
Uber, regarding bill 4064. Recently, the ride-hailing service industry has come under scrutiny for their under-regulated drivers, however the proposed regulation was too strict of a conclusion for the drivers. The proposed regulation, of the other bills, that we speak of is asking drivers to refrain from pickups at airports and requires strict fingerprinting along with background checks. The necessary regulation that would ensure the public’s safety is regulating them through a two-tier background check and regulating the car insurance policy that the company maintains.

Our connection to this bill is based on our frequent usage of the ride-hailing service Uber. As college students we and our fellow students rely on Uber for many safety reasons. For example, we have interviewed college students from Brandeis and other Massachusetts campuses and they attest that Uber is their way of preventing their drunk driving when needing to get home after a night of celebration or other drinking-related occasions. In addition, students look to Uber for transportation when feeling unsafe about walking in either an unsafe neighborhood or late at night. For these reasons, we support Uber and want to prevent strict, job reducing regulation because our and many other students’ safety would be directly impacted by this heavy unnecessary regulation. This is why I am writing to you asking for your support with bill 4064: An act relative to the ride for hire industry. This bill was constructed by Governor Charlie Baker in the hopes to regulate ride-hailing services only in the areas that were necessary such as background checks and car insurance.

The drivers we are advocating for are normal people who are working for extra income to help pay for their children’s education and survive in this economy. TNCs offer a great way to make a second income doing something that isn’t very time consuming. They should not be subject to any overbearing regulation but instead just reasonable regulation to ensure that the ride-hailing industry may maintain its originality and ability to prosper. I understand you may be concerned about the practicality of a bill that does not completely check everything about each potential candidate. However, the purpose of this bill was to protect the people who would use this service but there will be no service to use if these regulations are passed. This is why Gov. Baker’s bill will protect the interests of the people and the drivers affected by this regulation. If your concern is financial, the new bill calls for a department within the Department of Public Utilities that will oversee licenses and background checks, however, there is so far no budgetary allocation for bringing in a new system of checks for the two-tier background check. The most important point we would like to make is that the cost compared to protecting the safety of all users and drivers of these ride-hailing services is less important, if we can ensure public safety through these regulations. Thank you.

Letter to the Legislator

We are students from Brandeis University advocating for Bill H.4064. An act relative to the ride for hire industry. We believe that the safety of riders in Massachusetts is achieved through reasonable regulation of ride-hailing services. In the past year the regulations for ride-hailing companies have come under scrutiny in the wake of assault cases involving ride-hailing drivers. We and our fellow college students throughout Massachusetts frequently use Uber to stay safe while traveling through and around Boston, preventing drunk driving incidents, and traveling safely with a company we can rely upon. We are concerned that the regulation that was initially proposed regarding fingerprinting will resurface as a way to further regulate the ride-hailing industry. As a solution, if this problem resurfaces, the reasons for the removal of a fingerprinting clause must be reasserted in order to protect the interests of drivers and potential drivers. Counterarguments for fingerprinting would suggest that the drivers must be strictly hired and must prevent all possible problems but this argument does not protect the interest of companies or the driver’s right to privacy and therefore should not be made an amendment to the bill. There is no research, however, that would suggest fingerprinting is a reliable method for safer hiring. By preventing this strict regulation, the ride-hailing industry will continue to grow and prosper, encouraging technology and transportation innovation.

We are requesting that if you are involved in redrafting this bill, please consider preventing an amendment allowing for fingerprinting. Because it does not ensure further background checks and safety of drivers, please reconsider encouraging fingerprinting in this bill.

Excerpts from Campaign Journals

Matthew

Meeting one with Ryan Gelman on Friday February 12th in the Massachusetts State House:

[In contrast to other legislators,] the representatives in contact with Ryan did not see a need for fingerprinting. These were all very different looks at the bill that Danielle and I hadn’t experienced which really made this bill worth the time to look into. Ryan afterward provided us with transcripts from the first hearing regarding the bill and some others to reach out to and contact about our bill: these were Rep. Moran and Rep. Forry because they were to be part of the re-draft. We also received Ryan’s contact and a direction for others to reach out to and what to specifically ask about. In reflection, the meeting was very helpful and at the perfect time because Danielle and I had very little access to information and Ryan Gelman had exactly the information and contacts that we needed to further research the bill.
Danielle

My and Matt’s first real meeting concerning the Uber bill was with Ryan Gelman, Legislative Director, in the House auditorium. At this point in the legislative process the Uber bill was very new; in fact there were three different versions of bills regarding the regulation of Transportation Network Companies: the bill from Governor Baker, the Moran-Forry bill, and H931. During our meeting with Mr. Gelman, he informed us that the House Ways and Means Committee was most likely going to combine the three bills into one while trying to address all the areas the three separate bills wished for. Once the three bills were redrafted into one, the new bill would be sent to the House of Representatives for a vote. Mr. Gelman hinted that the House was more likely to be pro-taxi while the Senate would be pro-TNC. ... Finally Mr. Gelman informed us about the medallion issue occurring with taxis since competition with Uber was taking away from taxi’s profits. In short, a medallion is a taxi, initially purchased on loans by the state, and ever since Uber, taxis have been unable to repay the state for their medallions. While this issue was not at the forefront of discussions regarding TNC regulation, Mr. Gelman mentioned that it was a subtle issue that taxi companies were pushing to resolve.

■ Update

On August 5, 2016, the bill was enacted and signed by Governor Baker under bill H.4570.

For more information

View the Bill: malegislature.gov/Bills/189/House/H4064/History
Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Using carbon pricing to protect the environment

Dora Chi ’16
Judy Nam ’16

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts is expected to experience warmer temperatures, increased frequency and intensity of storms, public water supply shortages, rising sea levels, and increased erosion that will threaten our coastal areas. The Global Warming Solutions Act of 2008 requires the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs to establish a statewide limit on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of between 10 percent and 25 percent below 1990 levels for 2020. This bill amends the Global Warming Solution Act and aims to reduce greenhouse gasses not only for the environment but also additionally as a way to strengthen the Massachusetts economy.

The Bill

S.1747: An Act combating climate change

Elevator Speech

Good morning, my name is Judy Nam and this is my good friend Dora Chi. As seniors at Brandeis University studying economics and environmental studies, we are concerned about planning for the future. Because we are also registered voters in Massachusetts, we would like to make sure the legislature is doing its part to contribute to the future of the Commonwealth. The Boston Globe has reported that climate change is causing sea levels to rise and flood the coast, threatening over 34,000 homes along the Commonwealth’s shoreline. Carbon emissions have also led to incidences like the winter storms of 2014, which cost $40 million alone in direct costs – the total impact to taxpayers due to MBTA delays and the slowing of business activities is likely much higher. Massachusetts has been rated #1 in energy efficiency, and as national leaders of good environmental policy, we need to reduce emissions now to maintain this status. Since transportation and residential utilities make up 80% of the Commonwealth’s pollution, the fastest way to do so is to reduce our use of carbon-based fuels. Senator Barrett’s bill S.1747, “An Act combating climate change,” uses a policy of carbon pricing to regulate carbon emissions through market forces and consumer choice. This bill would add a small fee to carbon-based fuels, which
encourage residents and businesses to become mindful of their carbon footprint every time they use fossil fuels. The fee is then returned to citizens through a per capita rebate in order to help them transition to cleaner energy without hurting their wallets. Prominent legislators, scientific experts, and even leaders in the faith community support S.1747 for its economically and ethically sound strategy for environmental responsibility. We urge you to join them in co-sponsoring the bill, and to tell your fellow legislators to favorably report S.1747 out of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy. Together, we can ensure a vibrant future for Massachusetts, both environmentally and economically.

House Ways and Means Script

We’re honored to be able to speak with you about an issue felt both globally and locally. It’s no surprise that youth, particularly students like us who are about to enter the workforce, are concerned about job security and the economy. What may be surprising, however, is our genuine concern for the environment. Climate change is hitting MA hard and fast: The Boston Globe reports that rising sea levels are flooding the coast, destroying infrastructure at the cost of taxpayer dollars. As a leader in environmental policy, MA needs to reduce emissions now, and the fastest way to do so is to reduce our use of carbon-based fuels. Sen. Barrett’s bill S.1747, “An Act combating climate change,” enacts carbon pricing to regulate emissions through consumer choices. This bill adds a small fee to carbon emissions to encourage residents and businesses to be mindful of their carbon footprint, and then rebates this fee to help them transition to cleaner energy.

First, why a carbon fee? Sen. Barrett will introduce the social cost of carbon-emitting fuels over the course of seven years, starting at $10 per ton of CO2e [carbon dioxide equivalent] and gradually increasing to $40 per ton. This figure corresponds with the social cost of pollution calculated by prominent organizations like the World Bank. S.1747 recognizes the importance of market liberty by putting decision-making in the hands of consumers. The cheapest way to inform the public of the cost of negative behaviors is prices—a well-known example is the heavy MA tax on cigarettes. Thus the carbon fee redresses the failure of the existing market to recognizing the costs associated with the negative consequences of using fossil fuels, such as worsening air quality and damaged infrastructure from climate change-influenced weather incidents.

Second, how does the rebate work? The rebate is pro rata, meaning that each resident receives the same amount—on average, this will amount to about $275 per capita. Businesses will be rebated in a similar manner, receiving funds proportionate to the number of employees they have. The bill also includes a special provision for rural residents and carbon-intensive sectors to receive an extra rebate to compensate for their larger fuel use. Existing tax agencies such as the Department of Revenue will handle the schedule of rebates, which means that administrative costs will be minimal. The rebate thus allows the Commonwealth to work towards reducing carbon use without hurting the welfare of its citizens.

Third, what are the economic benefits? MA has the burden of finding cheap, clean energy due to its reliance on imported fossil fuels and its small manufacturing sector. This allows it to benefit from the bill: higher carbon costs would stimulate the clean energy industry and any job losses in the fossil fuel industry would not hurt the Commonwealth since this sector is located outside the state. Thus, S.1747 is job-positive and would keep money within MA, with the added benefit of attracting young workers interested in these growing industries. Additionally, MA economists have calculated that the bottom 60% of households can come out ahead by increasing energy efficiency and therefore cutting down energy costs.

Fourth, what is the existing support for this bill? Environmentalism is a common cause that can create unity across many sectors. Contrary to expectations, some businesses have already begun transitioning to clean energy. For example, Biogen, a large MA biotechnology firm, achieved carbon neutrality in 2014 by internalizing carbon pricing. Gentle Giant—a Somerville moving company likely to have high fuel costs—joined the Climate Action Business Association (CABA), a coalition founded for carbon pricing advocacy. Carbon pricing was monumentally successful in the Canadian province of British Columbia (BC), which enacted a revenue-neutral carbon pricing policy in 2008. The Canadian Globe reported that fuel use in BC dropped 16% while rates in the rest of Canada had risen 3%. In 2013, the independent organization Navius Research found that the average BC household would be better off by $121 per year in 2020 than if the tax had not been implemented. With this strong showing of economic growth and green policy, it’s no wonder that BC residents later voted to increase the fee amount.

Some people are wary of the bill because carbon pricing is often associated with the word “tax.” However, legally the fees proposed in the bill aren’t taxes, as the bill is revenue-neutral: the money goes into a fund that is then rebated back to MA residents, and collection and distribution can be done through existing MA executive agencies. Others may wonder why we need to enact this policy if businesses have already taken the initiative for clean energy. However, this is only the case for large firms with available capital; smaller companies can’t overcome costly barriers to investment without the push and incentive provided by the fee and rebate system. Skeptics
have also claimed that residents could drive to states with cheaper gas to avoid carbon pricing, and that the rebate would simply allow residents to pay for more gas, defeating the purpose of the bill. However, behavioral economics tells us that consumers are unwilling to part with money they’ve received; when they do spend it, purchases largely consist of basic goods. This means that local consumption and investment will go up, stimulating the MA economy further. Also, as the carbon fee is relatively small, “leakage” will only occur in border towns at a very minimal cost to the overall program.

The market-based rather than regulatory nature of the bill allows everyone to pay their fair share by making us all responsible for our impact on the environment. Prominent legislators, scientific experts, and even leaders in the faith community support carbon pricing. Rep. Dempsey, as the chair of the House Ways and Means Committee, you can play a vital role in making climate change a priority in the General Court by voting S.1747 favorably out of committee. Together, we can make a healthy economy and environment in MA a reality.

**Letter to the Legislator**

My name is Dora Chi, and my colleague Judy Nam and I are writing to you as Brandeis University seniors studying economics and environmental studies and as the next generation of voters on the cusp of entering the workforce. We would like to do what we can to ensure a vibrant future for Massachusetts that balances economic needs with environmental realities.

As residents of Waltham, we are already experiencing the consequences of climate change. How strange was it being pummeled with record-setting snowstorms last winter, then wearing shorts on a balmy 2016 New Year’s Day? Did you see the recent *Boston Globe* article reporting that sea levels are rising faster than ever, especially along the MA coastline, where 23,000 households are at risk of losing their homes. Even as we have earned the title of #1 in energy efficiency in nation, we are not on track to reach our 2050 greenhouse gas emissions target.

Still, we can take action now and lay the groundwork for a better future. A whopping 80% of Massachusetts’s greenhouse gas emissions are attributable to the use of fossil fuels to power our cars and heat our homes. Therefore, the most effective way to put us back on track to reach our 2050 greenhouse gas emissions target is to reduce our fossil fuel consumption.

By supporting Senator Barrett’s bill, S.1747: An Act combating climate change, we provide financial incentives to reduce pollution without impairing economic growth. The bill establishes a carbon fee of up to $0.36/gal of gas, which the state collects into a fund to be rebated in full back to residents and employers. This revenue-neutral carbon pricing system will protect our wallets as we reduce our dependency on fossil fuels, invest and nurture the alternative energy industry and create new jobs within. A Department of Energy Resources analysis estimates this system will create 2,000-4,000 jobs by 2020.

I am proud that my home state has historically been a leader in implementing critical programs and policies related to sustainability through energy efficiency. Experts agree that carbon pricing is a mechanism that works, but it is not yet enacted in the U.S. Elsewhere, it has proven its effectiveness in reducing emissions while fostering economic development even beyond expectations. Carbon pricing was enacted in the Canadian province of British Columbia in 2008, and the *New York Times* recently reported on the region’s success in both cutting emissions and growing economically at a level faster than its surrounding provinces (March 3, 2016).

Representative Stanley, Judy and I urge you to ask your fellow representatives to vote it favorably out of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy. You will be joining a vast and growing network of support from scientific experts, economists including Harvard Business School's Joe Lassiter, business coalitions and hundreds of diverse business groups including biopharmaceutical giant Biogen, faith leaders statewide including Rev. Fred Small and Rabbi Katy Allen, and last but not least, your local residents. By supporting S.1747, you will show your constituents that you care about the long-term well-being of MA residents, the statewide economy and our global environment.

**Excerpts from Campaign Journals**

**Dora**

Overall, lobbying on behalf of our bill was a productive learning experience. I’m glad we were able to hear about both large and small business perspectives on carbon pricing and to meet other supporters. It was encouraging to know that so many local business-oriented people are embracing sustainability alongside business goals. I believe their voices are particularly powerful to local legislators, as I imagine one of their initial concerns about carbon pricing is how it would impact the local businesses and economy.

**Judy**

Dora and I, accompanied by Andy, had our first State House meeting with Alex, an aide to Representative Thomas Golden. Representative Golden is the House Chair of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy.
(TUE). Because our Senate bill was in the TUE committee, it was vital to gauge support in the House. We didn't know quite what to expect yet from these meetings so we were a bit nervous despite our extensive preparations (we had a packet of handouts with statistics printed out for everyone). Unfortunately, the meeting did not go too smoothly – Alex believed that carbon pricing would be an additional burden on MA on top of existing sustainability programs like PACE and Mass Save. Later, we found out that these programs were opt-in and small-scale, and were poor arguments against carbon pricing. From this experience, Dora and I came away prepared to face opposition and with more research on existing programs.

**Update**

On March 16, 2016, both the House and Senate concurred to extend the reporting date to July 1, 2016.
There are thousands of homeless youth across the state of Massachusetts. Because of the hardships and conditions of homelessness, coupled with their legal status as minors, these individuals face many obstacles to accessing basic and emergency health care. Previously, homeless youth have essentially had to prove their homeless status by providing financial records to show they are living alone or away from their parents for some specific amount of time. These arbitrary measures have created needless hindrances for homeless youth trying to access basic healthcare services. The bill would help this vulnerable population access the health services they need and deserve.

The Bill

House Bill 2010: An Act relative to the health care of minors

Elevator Speech

Our names are Sara Kramer and Rachel Nathanson. We are students at Brandeis University and members of the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless. We’re here today to discuss the epidemic of homelessness among children and youth in the state of Massachusetts. We are very concerned that there are approximately 6,000 unaccompanied youth in the Commonwealth, many of whom are survivors of abuse, domestic violence and trauma. We have bright futures in public health and politics ahead of us, full of opportunities than many homeless youth may not have; by providing fair and equal access to health care, we give homeless youth increased opportunities for success. House Bill 2010: An Act relative to the health care of minors is an easy way to improve the quality of life for homeless youth because it makes access to emergency healthcare services easier for kids without a safe or stable home. The bill was ordered for it’s third reading; unfortunately, time ran out in the session. We need your help to keep this momentum going and get this bill passed in the current session. Young people are our future leaders; shouldn’t every child have the right to healthcare that we do? This bill will help youth who experience homelessness access these services and continue the stewardship that has made Massachusetts a national leader in progressive legislation. Will the representative vote bill H.2010 favorably out of the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing?
Hello [Representative/Chairman Dempsey (or staff member)]. Thank you for speaking with us today. Our names are Sara Kramer and Rachel Nathanson. We are students at Brandeis University and members of the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless. We’re here today to discuss the epidemic of homelessness among children and youth in the state of Massachusetts. Only through responsible planning will we help improve the quality of life for homeless youth and their housed peers. We are very concerned that there are approximately 6,000 unaccompanied youth in the Commonwealth, many of whom are survivors of abuse, domestic violence and trauma and who may not have the equal opportunities for success as students like us. House Bill 2010: An Act relative to the health care of minors makes it easier for kids without a parent or guardian to access emergency health care services. It clarifies Massachusetts General Law so that physicians and homeless youth can better understand the rights of this young population. The bill was ordered for it’s third reading; unfortunately, time ran out in the session. We need your help to keep this momentum going and get this bill passed in the current session.

Massachusetts has been a leader in healthcare services for years now through programs like MassHealth and by expanding Medicaid services. Help us continue that trend by making H.2010: An Act relative to the health care of minors a reality.

We understand that finances are an important consideration of any bill, and H.2010 is no exception. Fortunately, no additional budget allocations will be necessary, as money has already been allocated in the Commonwealth for health services for homeless youth; these funds are simply not being used to full capacity. For instance, programs like Medicaid and CHIP are available for many youth who experience homelessness, yet few know how to access these services or are aware that they even exist. There is a distinct lack of awareness and education regarding health care accessibility for homeless populations.

Emergency care is often a last resort and is thereby far more expensive than other basic health services. Even though everyone in Massachusetts can receive emergency healthcare when required, homeless youth face distinct barriers to accessing these services. Homeless minors’ fears of being arrested or taken by child services, coupled with physicians’ fears of liability, prevent this population from seeking or receiving these vital services. The often unsafe living arrangements faced by homeless individuals also contribute to their necessity of care because they are more likely to need these services due to their circumstances.

Accessibility of emergency services for youth who experience homelessness also acts as a preventative measure by making sure their conditions do not worsen. If, for example, they can obtain necessary medications possible complications are prevented as well. Perhaps most significantly, by providing emergency and prevention-based health services through bills like H.2010 we can actually reduce the state’s overall healthcare burden by reducing the use of costly, non-preventive services (e.g. surgeries related to cancer screenings). Therefore, the favorable passing of this bill would both allow youth who experience homelessness to get the care they need before their condition escalates to the point of seeking out emergency services, prevent higher healthcare costs and minimize barriers they face to accessing these essential health services.

By providing fair, equal and vital access to health care, we give homeless youth increased opportunities for success. Will the representative vote bill H.2010 favorably out of the House Ways and Means Committee?

We are writing to you as students at Brandeis University, constituents of Waltham, and members of the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless. Thank you for accepting our testimony on H.2010, An Act relative to the health care of minors. We have chosen to work on this bill in our class, Advocacy for Policy Change, and advocate for the rights of homeless youth in partnership with MassEquality, the aforementioned Coalition, and youth shelter Y2Y.

On Thursday, March 3rd, hundreds of Massachusetts residents convened at the State House for Legislative Action Day. Individuals who have experienced homelessness gave testimony, sharing tearful reflections of their life experiences. Angry advocates frustrated at the lack of funding spoke passionately about the need for issues pertaining to homelessness to be made a priority. Senate Majority Leader Chandler, a member of the Special Commission on Unaccompanied Homeless Youth, rallied constituents, encouraging them to speak to legislators and “hold our feet to the fire [on priority homelessness issues]...we need them, you need them, the Commonwealth needs them!” The event was a grandiose call to action for Massachusetts legislators to step up and champion for the rights of homeless people across the state.

However, homeless youth are too often left out of these conversations, though they need social services perhaps more than their adult counterparts. Violence or abuse are overwhelmingly the main reasons young people leave home and become homeless. In Massachusetts alone, there are an estimated 6,000 homeless youth dispersed throughout the state. This number is approximate, as unaccompanied youth are difficult to track due to their lifestyle, cycling from shelter to street.
While homeless youth deal with problems that the general homeless population faces – stigmatization, exposure to the frigid New England elements, lack of affordable housing, barriers to healthcare, mental health issues, and so on – this invisible population suffers from a unique set of challenges. The most concerning of these is an inability to access basic healthcare services due to the legal age of consent. And so, we call on you today to support H.2010: An Act relative to the health care of minors. The purpose of this legislation is to diminish the barriers to primary and emergency healthcare services for homeless youth. Healthcare providers have in the past been hesitant to provide care for homeless minors due to liability issues. By changing legal language in a section of Massachusetts General Law pertaining to the emergency treatment of minors, a legal obligation to obtain the consent of a parent or guardian for emergency services will no longer bind doctors from providing care in dire circumstances.

Massachusetts has been a leader in providing support and services to homeless youth. By backing this bill, we will prove our continued commitment to lifting up the most marginalized populations throughout Waltham and the Bay State. If you have any questions about this bill or require any other additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

**Excerpts from Campaign Journals**

**Sara**

I met with Lauren Gabriel, the Legal Resources Director at Y2Y in Cambridge, on 4/5/16. We discussed what the bill does, I answered some questions for her about it, how their organization can help us, and how we can help them. I thought the meeting would be more guided towards talking about homeless youth and the obstacles they face related to health care on the policy side in a more general sense but it developed into more of a discussion about what H.2010 would do, why it matters, and why these unaccompanied homeless youth have trouble accessing these services to begin with. This meeting was important because it involved reaching out to another organization that supports people who experience homelessness and explaining why this bill is important and how Y2Y can help us (ex: implementation of the bill if it passes). For example, they can reach out to legislators, other organizations, and get support from some of their clients who are directly affected by this legislation.

**Rachel**

As we entered the office of the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing, I noticed something I hadn’t before. There were photographs on the wall, a project done a year or two ago with photographs and stories about the lives of homeless folks around the Commonwealth. As experiences color your perception of your surroundings, the information your senses take in can shift. I had never noticed the pictures before, nor thought to ask their history. Even with some of the difficulties we’d faced and the barriers of bureaucracy to our advocacy efforts, it was comforting to know that others had come before us to raise awareness about the plights of homeless populations in Massachusetts.

**Update**

On June 20, 2016, the bill was read for a second time in the House and ordered to a third reading.

**For more information**

- **View the Bill:**
  - malegislature.gov/Bills/189/House/H2010
- **Y2Y:**
  - y2yharvardsquare.org
Sexual Assault on College Campuses

Enacting ways to prevent sexual assault and to properly respond to cases

Sasha Kliger '17
Leah Susman '18

The current climate of sexual assault and sexual misconduct on college campuses creates an environment which allows for one in ten students to experience nonconsensual sexual contact. Under the Clery Act and Title IX legislation, institutions are to provide specific information, options, and resources for victims in cases of sexual violence. In addition, institutions of higher education are to have a “prompt and equitable” process for resolving such complaints. There is a great need for the Commonwealth to take responsibility for ensuring the safety of college students throughout the state. This bill is designed to require schools to adapt a comprehensive approach to solving the epidemic of sexual violence on college campuses. The bill proposes measures to both prevent sexual violence and actively provide guidance to campus community members who have experienced assault.

- The Bill

H.1041 / S.679: An Act concerning sexual violence on higher education campuses

- Elevator Speech

Hello, my name is ______ and I am a student at Brandeis University. We need to ensure the safety and well-being of college students throughout the Commonwealth.

Experiencing sexual assault has prevented many college students from accessing the valuable opportunities of higher education. After an assault, people often feel unsafe on campus, and this type of stress can be reflected in their academic performance. This is mainly because the current state of the higher education system does not provide students with sufficient support and resources when it comes to the problem of sexual violence on college campuses.

Sexual assault on college campuses affects 1 in 5 undergraduate women and has prevented them from being able to access the valuable opportunities that higher education provides.
However, bill H.1041, An Act concerning sexual violence on higher education campuses will remedy this issue. This bill will provide both prevention education and counseling services for survivors. Most importantly, it will guide universities to ensure that survivors of sexual assault can live and learn in an environment without fear of violence, discrimination, and harassment.

Safety is not a privilege, it is a right. Would you be willing to speak to your colleagues on the Committee on Higher Education and encourage them to vote this bill favorably out of study?

Letter to the Legislator

Our names are Leah Susman and Sasha Kliger, and we are students at Brandeis University. We are writing to you to discuss an issue that concerns us as undergraduate women: the silenced epidemic of sexual violence on college campuses.

As the father of four young girls and a supporter of a wide variety of issues pertaining to public safety, we know that you prioritize the protection of your constituents. We are specifically referring to your advocacy on issues involving penalties for childhood sex abuse, Melissa’s Law, and your cosponsorship of a law focused on helping innocents plagued by human trafficking. As one of your constituents, I thank you for your dedication to the safety and security of the citizens of the 10th Suffolk District of Massachusetts and beyond. Presently, we would like to bring your attention to an issue that we think you could contribute to resolving.

Across the United States, one in five undergraduate women, many of whom are our classmates, are survivors of sexual violence. Yet, the current state of the higher education system does not provide student survivors with sufficient support and resources to be both proactive and reactive when it comes to the problem of sexual violence on college campuses. In Massachusetts alone, an alarming six universities are under Title IX investigation, including our university, Brandeis. In turn, the lack of resources and services has prevented survivors from being able to access the valuable opportunities that higher education provides.

Fortunately, the higher education system in Massachusetts can take a turn for the better: a new bill called H.1041/S.679 An Act concerning sexual violence on higher education campuses has the power to remedy this issue. This bill will provide prevention education and counseling services for survivors, and most importantly, it will guide universities to ensure that survivors of sexual assault can live and learn in an environment without fear of violence, discrimination, and harassment.

Some point out that this bill does not outline consequences for noncompliance. Others criticize the bill for its focus on legal procedures, as well as its restrictions on the policies and procedures at individual institutions. However, we assert that this bill is a necessary step in the direction of supporting survivors and ending sexual violence on college campuses. Without the involvement of outside groups and authorities, it is abundantly clear that both education about sexual violence and disciplinary procedures following occurrences of sexual violence are sorely lacking at many colleges and universities. We need to set a minimum threshold for protecting college students from the threat of sexual violence, and H.1041/S.679 will do just that.

We request that you speak with your colleagues on the Committee on Higher Education and ask them to vote it favorably out of committee as a vital first step in addressing the issue of sexual violence on college campuses in Massachusetts. Thank you for your time and consideration as we know you will give this issue the attention it deserves.

House Ways and Means Script

Mr. Chairman (Representative Dempsey), thank you for taking the time to meet with us.

We would like to talk to you about a bill which would ensure the safety and well-being of all Massachusetts college students. As a father of three, we know that you value the safety of your children. Safety is not a privilege, it is a right, however, colleges and universities are not providing students with the safe community environment that parents trust their children will have. Sexual violence is a pervasive problem on college campuses, and these institutions are not protecting students.

The epidemic of sexual assault has affected the lives of 1 in 3 undergraduate women, and it has prevented them from being able to access the opportunities that a higher education is meant to provide. The current state of the higher education system does not provide students with sufficient support and resources in order to properly prevent and react to instances of sexual violence on college campuses. Many institutions prefer to ignore reality and claim that this kind of violence does not happen on their campuses, but data from countless surveys demonstrates that it happens everywhere. Universities must be properly equipped to deal with this issue and provide the necessary support for victims of sexual violence.

The Massachusetts legislature can help support affected students. There is currently a bill being reviewed by the House Committee on Higher Education which addresses the issue of sexual assault. Sponsored by Rep. Farley Bouvier and Rep. Donahue, An Act concerning sexual violence on
higher education campuses, House Bill #1041, aims to set guidelines for colleges and universities to help them ensure that survivors of sexual assault can live and learn in an environment without fear of further violence and harassment. This bill approaches the issue of sexual violence from many angles. It puts in place services to help survivors of assault, such as easily accessible reporting systems, and makes confidential advisors available to students. The bill mandates certain disciplinary procedures in cases of sexual assault and obligates schools to have properly trained staff and counselors to assist those experiencing the aftermath of sexual violence. The bill also instructs universities to implement proper bystander training programs in order to ensure that students are trained in prevention and intervention strategies and mandates schools make necessary resources easily available to students. By passing this legislation, the Massachusetts legislature can help ensure that colleges and universities throughout the state will have proper counseling services and educational programming. This will allow them to better deal with cases of sexual assault and better support survivors of sexual violence.

It is important to note that there is recent federal legislation regarding the issue of sexual assault on college campuses. However, An Act concerning sexual violence on higher education campuses is meant to complement federal legislation, such as the Clery Act and Title IX. Title IX focuses on equality of education, free from discrimination, but the federal legislation does not currently keep track of the procedures and processes institutions put in place to ensure a safe campus environment in enough depth. The supplementary legislation on a state level would provide greater oversight of institutions and help schools struggling with fulfilling Title IX obligations by providing requirements for procedures and programming. Additionally, the speed with which bills are passed and implemented on a federal level can be much slower than on the state level. It is the legislature’s responsibility to make sure that Massachusetts college students are safe, regardless of what happens on a federal level.

Passing House Bill 1041 would place a minimal burden on the state budget. The bill puts the responsibility of funding services and training on the institutions themselves. Given the flexibility schools have with how they provide programming and resources, it would be simple for schools to fulfill the requirements. Institutions could, quite feasibly, rearrange certain costs in order to accommodate the necessary guidelines. While there may be some pushback from schools because of this cost, it ultimately is extremely low, especially given the necessity of these resources for the many students experiencing sexual violence on campuses throughout Massachusetts. Ultimately, the greatest cost associated with implementing the guidelines in the bill would be the salary and training of a single properly trained counselor, a very minimal cost for something which would help universities fulfill their responsibilities in keeping their students healthy and safe. This small cost will go a very long way especially in Massachusetts, where there is a large number of colleges and universities and there are many students in need of these services. Currently, six universities in Massachusetts are under Title IX investigation, indicating a need for a change in the status quo. However, this bill proposes better proactive and reactive services and resources, which can allow Massachusetts to better support students throughout the Commonwealth.

H.1041/S.679 is currently in the Joint Committee on Higher Education. We ask that you speak to your colleagues on the Committee and urge them to vote in favor of the bill. Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Excerpts from Campaign Journals
Sasha

Rep. Farley-Bouvier told us the story of how she became involved in the issue (touring colleges with her daughter) and about how she went about filing the bill in light of recent federal legislation surrounding the issue of sexual assault on college campuses. She explained that from her point of view, it was the Commonwealth’s responsibility to keep students safe regardless of the speed of the federal legislative process and to create a consistency in the way schools across the state handle instances of sexual violence. She also told us about some of the opposition the bill received, such as concerns about the rights of the accused student, and the lowering of the burden of proof in university proceedings. This was interesting, as I had not thought much about this legal basis for opposition prior to speaking to Rep. Farley-Bouvier. All of this information was very important and interesting to hear from Rep. Farley-Bouvier’s perspective, and it was reassuring to hear that she would continue pushing the issue in the next legislative session if the bill never left study this year. Overall, it was a very productive meeting. The only thing that could have gone better was our actual filming of the interview, which proved a little tricky, and we had to waste time setting up the camera and getting it to work.

Meeting with Sam Daniels, Student Worker at Brandeis Office of Prevention Services:
Leah and I met with Sam twice this semester, once at the very beginning of the process on February 8th, and once later (on April 6th), to hold a second interview and tape it to use in our video project. We met with Sam in the student center, and we asked her about how she got involved with the Office
of Prevention Services. She also told us about the services she knows Brandeis has for survivors of sexual assault, and she explained how new and underfunded these services are. Then we went through portions of the bill with Sam, and she spoke about how, in her experience, the resources outlined in the bill can be useful for survivors and communities. In the first meeting, it was great to hear more about the services at Brandeis and use them as a reference point throughout the rest of our work on this bill. In our second meeting, we were much more familiar with the bill and the issue, so we were able to ask Sam more pointed questions and get more specific and productive answers.

Leah
Sasha and my meeting with Representative Coppinger at the Massachusetts State House was our first meeting with a representative and also our most exciting one. We were looking forward to meeting with him because of his past support of issues pertaining to public, specifically in the context of sexual abuse. He was not already a signed onto the bill, but Sasha and I knew that considering his record, we could advocate for H.1041 within his self-interest. As it turned out, Representative Coppinger was not even aware of H.1041. He told us that as the father of daughter in her first year of college, the issue of sexual assault on college campuses hits close to home. He was very thankful that we brought this issue and the bill to his attention. Upon our departure from the office, we gave Representative Coppinger our storybook. The following day, we received a copy of a letter that he sent to the Joint Committee on Higher Education, urging them to recommend H.1041 for favorable passage. It was incredibly rewarding to see that Sasha’s and my meeting with the Representative made a tangible impact. It was even more exciting to see that his letter incorporated exact language from our storybook. This experience showed me the power of advocacy and how one meeting can make a real impact. If I could change something about how Sasha and I moved forward, it would have been to keep up our relationship with Representative Coppinger. It was clear that he was willing to take an active stance on this issue. If one meeting led him to sending an letter the Joint Committee on Higher Education, I wonder what else he could have done to help advocate for the bill.

■ Update
On April 21, 2016, the bill was ordered to study and was referred to the House Committee on Rules.

For more information
View the Bill:
malegislature.gov/Bills/189/House/H1041
The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) was signed into law on March 23, 2010, and with it came the requirement that most private plans provide coverage for women’s preventive health care, including all prescribed FDA-approved contraceptive services and supplies, without cost-sharing. Insurance companies are not fully covering all forms of contraception, which they are legally required to do according to the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act. This bill calls for guaranteed coverage of therapeutic equivalents and alternatives to contraceptives. The bill also redefines the rights that church-affiliated employers have over contraceptive coverage for their employees, who were previously exempt from all contraceptive coverage.

The Bill
S.483/H.948: An Act relative to women’s health and economic equity

Elevator Speech
My name is [Lilah Kleban/Emma Kraft] and I’m a student at Brandeis University, studying sociology with concentrations in women and gender studies and social justice and social policy.

We are young women planning our futures. As we’re preparing to graduate, I’m thinking about whether to not I want to go to graduate school, what career I want, where I want to live, and eventually, family planning. Part of family planning is having access to contraception.

However, if I decide to stay in Massachusetts after graduation, I won’t have full access to contraception.

Even though the Affordable Care Act – inspired by Massachusetts’ historic health care achievement in 2006 – guarantees us contraception, insurance companies are finding loopholes to avoid covering all methods of FDA-approved contraception. Women aren’t guaranteed the choice between the best contraception methods, such as an IUD versus the pill. To date, Massachusetts has chosen not to act – and we are seeing the consequences.
The most recent data shows that in the course of one year in Massachusetts, there were 54,000 unintended pregnancies, of which 13,000 resulted in publicly funded births. The preventative cost would have been $5 million, but instead, these unintended pregnancies cost the government $350 million. Instead of focusing on the cost of covering contraceptives for all women, we want you to focus on the astronomical cost of not addressing the consequences.

Senate Bill 483 will close these loopholes and let women and their doctors decide the best form of contraception for their health needs, which means women like us can better plan our futures. This bill will allow women to choose with their doctors the best contraception for their health needs and lifestyles.

Given Massachusetts’ rich and proud history of planning for the health and well-being of its residents, we think this bill is a natural addition to its healthcare legacy. Please support Senate Bill 438 favorably out of the Joint Committee on Financial Services and encourage your colleagues to do the same.

**House Ways and Means Script**

We are young women planning our futures. As we’re preparing to graduate, I’m thinking about whether or not I want to go to graduate school, what career I want, where I want to live, and eventually, family planning. Part of family planning is having access to contraception.

However, if I decide to stay in Massachusetts after graduation, I won’t have full access to contraception.

Senator Spilka, your petition for Senate Bill 335, An Act relative to special education reimbursements, works for similar equity that we want for women’s health. One of the fundamental ideas behind reimbursements for special education is that ascribed qualities, such as learning disabilities, should not determine a person’s ability to participate in society on equal terms.

Senate Bill 483 will close these loopholes and let women and their doctors decide the best form of contraception for their health needs, which means women like us can better plan our futures. This bill will allow women to choose with their doctors the best contraception for their health needs and lifestyles to address family planning and encourage equal terms with men.

We know you understand the importance of women’s involvement in the workforce from your resolution encouraging equitable and diverse gender representation on the boards of companies in the Commonwealth. By allowing women to make decisions about when they would like to have children, the Commonwealth is encouraging and allowing women to participate in the workforce on equal terms with men and eventually hold positions of power in the workforce. We also know you are already working to make working conditions more equitable for women from your support of the recent pay equity legislation.

Even though the Affordable Care Act – inspired by Massachusetts’ historic health care achievement in 2006 – guarantees us contraception, insurance companies are finding loopholes to avoid covering all methods of FDA-approved contraception. Women aren’t guaranteed the choice between the best contraception methods, such as an IUD versus the pill. To date, Massachusetts has chosen not to act – and we are seeing the consequences.

The most recent data shows that in the course of one year in Massachusetts, there were 54,000 unintended pregnancies, of which 13,000 resulted in publicly funded births. The preventative cost would have been $5 million, but instead, these unintended pregnancies cost the government $350 million. Instead of focusing on the cost of covering contraceptives for all women, we want you to focus on the astronomical cost of not addressing the consequences.

When the average cost of a monthly birth control pill, hormonal patch, and NuvaRing is between $15 and $50, covering contraception for those 13,000 women would have been between $2 million and $8 million. Even a higher-cost method like an IUD which can cost anywhere from $500 to $1000 would still only cost about $7 million a year because this method is effective for five years.

However, unintended pregnancies can cost the state upwards of $350 million – just for the birth. Many of these women and their children will likely be eligible for Medicaid, receive SNAP and social security benefits, all of which further utilize public funding until that child is at least 18. The Guttmacher Institute estimated that for every dollar spent to provide publicly-funded contraceptive services, an average of $4.02 is saved in Medicaid expenses on births.

Instead of focusing on the cost of covering contraceptives for all women, we want you to focus on the astronomical cost of not addressing the consequences. Senate Bill 483 will close these loopholes and let women and their doctors decide the best form of contraception for their health needs, which means women like us can better plan our futures. This bill will allow women to choose with their doctors the best contraception for their health needs and lifestyles.

Given Massachusetts’ rich and proud history of planning for the health and well-being of its residents, we think this bill is a natural addition to its health care legacy. Please support Senate Bill 438 by voting it favorably out of the Committee of Ways and Means and encourage your colleagues, including your co-chair Representative Dempsey, on the committee to do the same.
Letter to the Legislator

We are young women planning our futures. As we prepare to graduate, we are thinking about whether to not we want to go to graduate school, what careers we want, where we want to live, and eventually, family planning. One crucial aspect of responsible family planning is having access to contraception.

We are writing to you with specific concerns regarding health care for women – concerns that, given your sponsorship of S.626, we believe will resonate deeply with you. S.483, An Act relative to women’s health and economic equity, will uphold what is guaranteed under the ACA and will see that contraception coverage is, in fact, covered and easily accessible for women in Massachusetts.

However, if we decide to stay in Massachusetts after graduation, we will not have full access to contraception. Even though the Affordable Care Act – inspired by Massachusetts’ historic healthcare achievement in 2006 – guarantees us contraception, insurance companies are finding loopholes to avoid covering all methods of FDA-approved contraception. Women are not guaranteed the choice between the best contraception methods, such as an IUD versus the pill.

To date, Massachusetts has chosen not to act – and we are seeing the consequences.

The most recent data shows that in the course of one year in Massachusetts, there were 54,000 unintended pregnancies, of which 13,000 resulted in publicly funded births. The preventative cost would have been $5 million, but instead, these unintended pregnancies cost the government $350 million. Instead of focusing on the cost of covering contraceptives for all women, we want you to focus on the astronomical cost of not addressing the consequences.

Senate Bill 483 will close these loopholes and let women and their doctors decide the best form of contraception for their health needs, which means women like us can better plan our futures. This bill will allow women to choose with their doctors the best contraception for their health needs and lifestyles.

Given Massachusetts’ rich and proud history of planning for the health and well-being of its residents, we think this bill is a natural addition to its healthcare legacy. Will you vote for S.438 favorably out of the Joint Committee on Financial Services and encourage your colleagues to do the same?

Excerpts from Campaign Journals

Lilah

Hearing stories from specific women about their own experiences trying to get contraception is frustrating and is relatable. However, hearing about these frustrations from a medical professional’s point of view was overwhelming. When the process is so complicated for one person to constantly make back-and-forth phone calls, it is daunting how one nurse or doctor balances multiple cases, while they still have their routine jobs to do. This meeting [with Diana Denning] was successful in understanding the different complications that women and doctors face when trying to get contraceptives.

... This meeting was a turning point for how I interacted with other policymakers: I can say my facts in a convincing way, talk about the injustices in the healthcare system, but bringing the focus to myself changes the dynamic in the room. When speaking to Joseph Masciangioli, talking about myself made the conversation personable and relatable. When speaking to the legislative aide for Representative Holmes, who is “pro life” and responded to us primarily as young girls, making myself the subject made it more difficult for him to tell us “no,” because he was faced with someone directly affected. Sometimes, this tactic was really effective. However, any legislator who said they were “pro life” required careful treading. I had to learn to balance between being convincing and personal, while not being accusatory.

Emma

[The meeting with the aide] was really exciting as the legislative aide was helpful, supportive, and nice. She was happy to hear what we had to say and excited that we were doing this work. It made me realize that even when we were not working with a coalition, as young, female college students, we still had legitimacy and the proper knowledge when speaking about the issue. I also realized how young much of the staff at the State House is and how that makes it easier to connect with the people working there as young people advocating for legislation. It’s much easier to be an advocate than anyone realizes. I think, however, not many people necessarily have the time or knowledge to devote to advocating even if they are very supportive of certain legislation. We were very lucky to be at a university that presented us with the opportunity to do this type of work and that provided us with the tools to be knowledgeable advocates about legislation: not everyone has that privilege!

Update

On June 9, 2016, the bill was ordered to study and as of this publication was discharged to the House Committee on Rules.

View the Bill:
malegislature.gov/Bills/189/House/H948

For more information
Unlicensed drivers are five times more likely to get into a fatal car accident than a licensed driver. According to the Pew Research Center, Massachusetts is currently home to 120,000 to 200,000 undocumented immigrants, which accounts for approximately 20% of the immigrants in the state. Some Massachusetts residents who are immigrants are allowed to apply for a driver’s license or permit because they are not able to provide a Social Security number or immigrant status, but many immigrants need to drive in order to work, due to lack of access to public transportation. Without a driver’s license, one cannot obtain automobile insurance, which does not help the “legal” party if an accident occurs. An Act relative to safe driving would allow all Massachusetts residents to become trained, licensed, and insured to drive without the necessity to be eligible for a Social Security number or proof immigrant status, making roads safer for every driver.

**The Bill**

H.2985: An Act relative to safe driving

**Elevator Speech**

My name is Taiseer Rahman and I, along with my colleagues Ryan Tettemer and Jordan Buscetto, are students at Brandeis University and are volunteering with MIRA coalition and we’re here to talk about an essential public safety issue. There are approximately 150,000 people in Massachusetts living here without authorization who do not have the opportunity to obtain a license because they are unable to get a Social Security number. These residents contributed $201,369,000 in state and local taxes by working jobs to provide for their families. However, they have to do so without proper training, driver’s licenses and insurance. Without proper training, drivers are five times more likely to get into a fatal car accident, as we saw in the deaths of Richard Grossi in 2009 and Matthew Denice in 2011. That is why we implore you to support bill H 2985: An Act relative to safe driving, which would improve public safety by making driving school and appropriate license testing accessible to all of those in the Commonwealth.
Letter to the Legislator

My name is Taiseer Rahman and I, along with my colleagues Ryan Tettemer and Jordan Buscetto, are students at Brandeis University and are volunteering with MIRA coalition and are writing to you about an essential public safety issue. An Act relative to safe driving would improve public safety by making driving school and appropriate license testing accessible to all of those in the Commonwealth. This is a concern because there are approximately 150,000 people in Massachusetts living here without authorization who do not have the opportunity to obtain a license because they are unable to get a Social Security number. Without a license, they are lacking the opportunity to learn this state’s driving laws and are therefore not eligible for insurance. Both of these factors are compounded into a societal danger for everyone; when people who are not able to get a license and yet still drive and get into an automobile accident with a citizen, that affected person is not able to collect insurance. People are still driving without a license in order to provide for their families, so instead of encouraging them to break the law, we should give them the opportunity to cooperate. The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety found that unlicensed drivers are 5 times more likely to get into a fatal car accident than licensed drivers, as we saw in the deaths of Richard Grossi in 2009 and Matthew Denice in 2011. It would be responsible planning to provide an equal opportunity to learn the rules of the road and apply for a license in order to protect our community.

I am an immigrant from Bangladesh and learned that you are an immigrant from Cape Verde. Therefore, we both understand the arduous process that families must go through to obtain a Social Security number and proper immigration status. Unfortunately thousands of immigrants lack the same opportunities that we had but are still working here in the United States to provide for their families and children. This bill would allow these working citizens to drive without the constant fear of being pulled over, and facing punishment for driving without a license and insurance. The police are also in support of this bill as it would allow them to easily identify who they are dealing with, to avoid confusion. Please know that this bill would only grant them permission to drive without any other public benefits like flying or voting rights, so it is strictly a matter of road safety.

Representative Carvalho, I implore you to support the Safe Driving Bill, H.2985, and urge the members of the Joint Transportation Committee to make this bill a priority and vote it out of committee favorably. This bill would allow all residents of Massachusetts to be trained, licensed, and insured drivers.

House Ways and Means Script

My name is Taiseer Rahman and I, along with my colleagues Ryan Tettemer and Jordan Buscetto, are students at Brandeis University and residents of Waltham. I am writing to you because I am concerned about a serious public safety hazard and national security. In light of what has happened in Massachusetts in the past few years, this issue is more urgent than ever. Car accidents are not always preventable, but the rate of incidents will decrease as people are getting the proper education and opportunity for licensing. The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety found that unlicensed drivers are 5 times more likely to get into a fatal car accident than licensed drivers, as we saw in the deaths of Milford residents Richard Grossi in 2009 and Matthew Denice in 2011. This is why I am writing to you to ask you for your support with House Bill 2985: An Act relative to safe driving. By supporting this bill, you can actually help save lives.

There are approximately 150,000 people in Massachusetts living here without authorization and according to a 2016 report by the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy they have contributed $201,369,000 in state and local taxes. This means that these residents are driving uninsured and without a license on a daily basis to travel to work and provide for their families. This is because they do not have a Social Security number and proper immigration status. According to the American Action Forum the United States spends approximately $400 billion to $600 billion to deport 11.3 million undocumented immigrants primarily funded (92%) through taxpayer money. However, implementing bill H.2985 would allow undocumented immigrants to receive proper driving education and access to driver’s licenses and insurance, which would raise RMV revenues in Massachusetts by about $15,000,000 (approximation calculated by Massachusetts Immigrants and Refugees Advocacy Coalition). In addition to financial benefits this bill would also ensure public road safety as all drivers would be educated and insured. Even though Massachusetts has a no fault policy in the case of an accident with an uninsured driver, it comes at the cost of $15,000,000 (approximation calculated by Massachusetts Immigrants and Refugees Advocacy Coalition). In addition to financial benefits this bill would also ensure public road safety as all drivers would be educated and insured. Even though Massachusetts has a no fault policy in the case of an accident with an uninsured driver, it comes at the cost of higher premium rates for the licensed and insured driver. The police are also in favor of this bill, as it would allow them to correctly identify drivers and pull up their records to assess the threat level they may encounter. As an economist yourself, surely you can see that from an economic standpoint this bill yields overwhelmingly positive results as exemplified by states such as Connecticut, California, Washington D.C, Vermont, etc., who have all enacted similar bills. If we cost-benefit analyze the situation we see that the marginal benefits to society greatly outweigh the costs, as the benefits are not only fiscal, but include preventing the loss of human life as well.
I understand you may be concerned about the practicality of a bill like this, but know that it is not a divisive issue. Everyone wants to prevent the tragedy of car accidents, which take the people of Massachusetts’ lives. Some may be concerned about allowing people in the state without authorization and proper documentation to have the opportunity to get a license because they think that it encourages breaking the law and gives people special benefits that only authorized citizens should have. However, this bill would in fact do the opposite. It would no longer require people to endlessly break the law by driving without a license and the proper knowledge of our road regulations in order to support their families and live their lives.

Chairman Dempsey, I implore you to support the Safe Driving Bill H.2985 and urge the members of the Joint Transportation Committee to make this bill a priority and vote it out of committee favorably. This bill would allow all residents of Massachusetts to be trained, licensed, and insured drivers. Thank you.

Excerpts from Campaign Journals

Jordan

To be completely honest, when I was first learning about bill H.2985, An Act relative to safe driving, I was pessimistic that anything I did would be beneficial toward helping pass this bill. Professor Stimell had prepared us to see this bill fail, as it is extremely controversial and has been advocated for for the past ten years without any success. However, it was extremely encouraging to work with the MIRA (Massachusetts Immigrants and Refugee Advocacy) coalition and to see that our work had actually made a difference. I had participated in many conference calls with their organizers, including Thalita Dias, Maria Alcaraz, and members of other coalitions as well. Many of these calls were directing us on how to advocate for the Safe Driving Bill effectively. Thalita, their field organizer, had actually asked me personally whether I would like to be a team leader for the Immigrants’ Day at the State House on April 11, 2016 and I jumped at the opportunity. Not only would this present my group with a great opportunity to get directly involved with the bill, but it would also allow me to create personal connections with the higher management in MIRA.

I have become personally invested in immigrant rights and attempting to subside racial tensions, especially in the wake of Donald Trump and Ted Cruz’ candidacies for president. I never thought that I would want to become involved with an advocacy position, but the passion to help people is one that I share, and I have actually been looking into getting involved with MIRA outside of this course.

Ryan

Immigrants from all over the state visited the State House that day to be a part of something special (Immigrants’ Day). The ceremony began with a children’s choir as they joyfully sang songs about the world and bringing everyone together. I was actually really impressed as the children started to sing in different languages! It was really something special and it brought everyone together as we all cheered for them. Just when you thought things started to settle down, it didn’t. A speaker approached the podium and immediately brought an uproar. He chanted, “Many Voices” and everyone chimed in, “Join for Justice!” It was truly inspirational as people from all over the world came together and were fighting for the same causes. He named countries from all over and no matter where he named, there was either a family or individual there who was representing their country. This was my favorite part because he had 600-700 people chanting and cheering for each and every country he named. It really brought the crowd together as you were able to laugh and smile with the
strangers next to you. Connections were immediately made with the people around us and friendships were formed. The reason for Immigrants’ Day was to advocate for various pro-immigrant policies, including the Safe Driving Bill. However, as the day progressed, you sensed the feeling it was much more than that to the people there. It brought immigrants and refugees who were all battling with the same struggles, day in and day out, together to advocate their rights as one. It brought a special feeling to Gardner Auditorium to witness hundreds of people come together and fight for what is right. I enjoyed Immigrants’ Day very much as it was a great experience and definitely something I will always remember being a part of.

- **Update**
  On May 2, 2016, the bill was adopted.

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