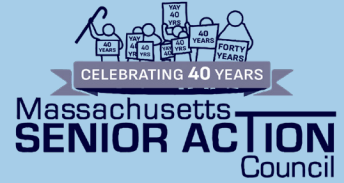


Senior Action Leader



A VOICE FOR SENIORS AND THEIR FAMILIES

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www.MassSeniorAction.org

Summer 2021

Reallocating Public Funds vs. Defund Police: What does it mean for the community and for safety?

“Defund the police” means reallocating or redirecting funding away from the police department to other government agencies funded by the local municipality. That’s it. It’s that simple. Defund does not mean abolish policing. And, even some who say abolish, do not necessarily mean to do away with law enforcement altogether. Rather, they want to see the rotten trees of policing chopped down and fresh roots replanted anew. Camden, New Jersey, is a good example. Nearly a decade ago, Camden disbanded (abolished) its police force and dissolved the local police union. This approach seems to be what Minneapolis will do in some

form, though the nuances are important.

Different from abolishing and starting anew, defunding police highlights fiscal responsibility, advocates for a market-driven approach to taxpayer money, and has some potential benefits that will reduce police violence and crime. Here are some of the main arguments for defunding the police.

CALLS FOR SERVICE:

Data show that 9 out of 10 calls for service are for nonviolent encounters. Now, this does not mean that an incident will not turn violent, but police at times contribute to the escalation of violent force. Police officers’ skillset

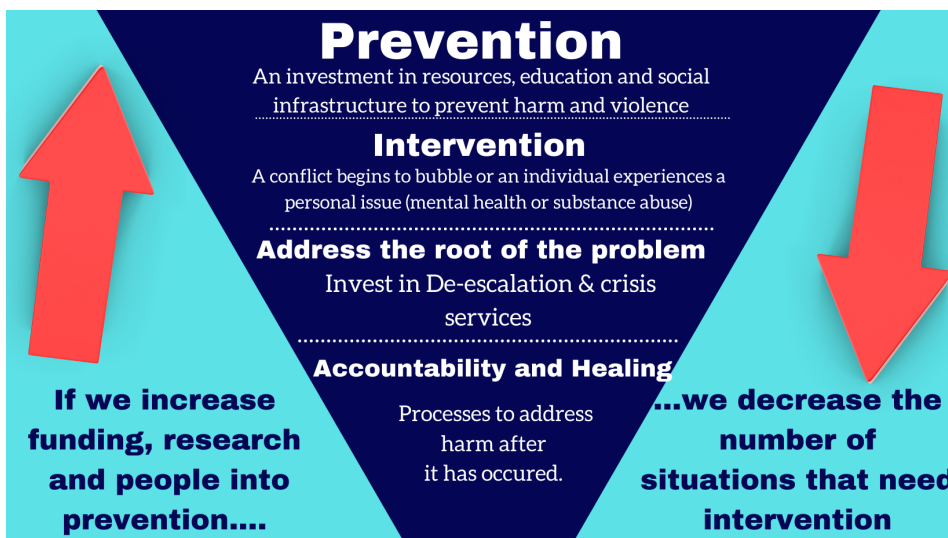
and training are often out of sync with the social interactions that they have. Police officers are mostly trained in use-of-force tactics and worst-case scenarios to reduce potential threats. However, most of their interactions with civilians start with a conversation.

Some advocates for the defund movement argue that shifting funding to

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Contact Information:

Main Office/Eastern MA

108 Myrtle St. Suite 112

Quincy, MA 02171

617-284-1234

www.MassSeniorAction.org

Executive Director: Carolyn Villers

Cvillers@MassSeniorAction.org

Social Media: Twitter: @SeniorActionMA

Facebook: www.facebook.com/MassSeniorAction

All meetings are virtual due to COVID-19. Contact an organizer to join.

CONTRIBUTORS:

Edna Pruce - MSAC President

Carolyn Villers - MSAC Executive Director

Pam Edwards - MSAC Organizing Director

Zach Boyer - MSAC Organizer

Tracey Carpenter - MSAC Organizer

Claudia Pérez - MSAC Organizer

Josie Hatuey - MSAC Organizer

Alexander Nadel - MSAC Organizer

Eric Holmberg - MSAC Organizer

Shayla Fonfield, MSAC Organizing Asst.

David Boulet-Gercourt, Intern

STATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Edna Pruce, President

Kathy Paul, 1st Vice President

Linda Moore, 2nd Vice President

Rosa Bentley, Treasurer

John Ratliff, Secretary

Karen Lynch, Membership Coordinator

Chapter Meeting Information:

BOSTON CHAPTER

When: 2nd Thursday of the month at 11:30 pm

Location: Charles St. AME Church

551 Warren Street, Dorchester

CAMBRIDGE/ SOMERVILLE CHAPTER

When: 3rd Friday of the month at 11:30 pm

Location: Cambridge Senior Center

806 Mass Avenue, Cambridge

NORTH SHORE CHAPTER

When: 3rd Wednesday of the month at 10:30 am

Location: 10 Church Street, Lynn

METRO NORTH CHAPTER

When: 4th Wednesday of the month at 1:30 pm

Location: Malden Senior Community Center

7 Washington Street, Malden

GREATER SPRINGFIELD CHAPTER

When: 4th Wednesday of the month at 1:00 pm

Location: Springfield Hobby Club

309 Chestnut Street, Springfield

BRISTOL COUNTY CHAPTER

When: 4th Thursday of the month at 1:00 pm

Location: Greenwood Terrace,

Westport Housing Authority

666 State Road, Westport

NORTH SEACOAST AFFILIATE

Meetings paused. Members will

receive monthly updates.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Enclosed are membership dues for:

\$10 1-year individual \$15 1-year couple \$50 individual lifetime \$75 couple lifetime

NAME(s): _____

ADDRESS: _____ APT #: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

Yes, I would like all notices sent by email, instead of postal mail, including this quarterly newsletter.

Make checks payable to: MSAC

Mail to: Mass Senior Action, 108 Myrtle Street, Suite 112, Quincy, MA 02171

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT by Edna Pruce

It is safe to say that the year 2020 and the beginning months of 2021 have been like no other because of the pandemic. Be that as it may, We've made a number of adjustments with and through virtual meetings and did not let it deter us from our mission. In fact, we have been busier than ever.

The Medicare Saving Program (MSP) or (Healthcare steering Committee) has been busier than ever doing "Yeoman's" work. We, since February with your help, have called the office of every State Senator and Representative. We have held virtual meetings to recruit cosponsors for our amendment to the State budget and continue to do so for the legislation to be filed in the fall. We ended up with 67 House cosponsors and 25 Senators cosponsors to the amendment but it did not come up in the proceedings. We will be working hard in preparation for the legislation

to be filed in the fall.

Between February and June, we met with the staff of the House Majority Leader Cronin, Speaker Mariano's office, Sen. Lovely's office, Senate President Spilka's office, and the Senate Ways and Means Committee, we have also met virtually with Senators Freidman, Brownsberger, Chandler, Tarr, Creem, Jehlen and Didomenico; and Representative Ultrino, Tyler, Lawn, Decker, and Health and Human Service Secretary Sudders.

We held a very successful virtual rally in April to highlight the need for the expansion of the Medicare Saving Program (MSP) with our co-sponsors. We currently have 70 cosponsors in the House of Representatives for legislation being debated in the fall.

Ironically, we currently have more working committees than before the pandemic. They include Police Reform,



Photo: President Pruce at the June 9 Springfield rally

Housing, Long Term Care, Healthcare (MSP), Transit, and Senior Property Taxes.

For the first time in 14 months we came together for a rally in Springfield to support our sisters and brothers in their demand for the resignation of the local police commissioner. "Cheers" to all of my brothers and sisters who are staying active in these unprecedented times, for your efforts to keep our concerns heard, and to fight for action and change.



MISSION: As a democratic, grassroots, senior-run organization, Massachusetts Senior Action is committed to empowering seniors and others to act collectively to promote the rights and well-being of all people, but particularly vulnerable seniors.

Fair Share Amendment Passes State House Hurdles, Voters Determine Fate in 2022

Mass Senior Action is no stranger to the struggle for economic security and justice. Since our founding, MSAC has believed that economic security is not a privilege- but a right; a right that should be guaranteed so that everyone can live with adequate income. That is precisely why Mass Senior Action is working with Raise Up Massachusetts and a coalition of other community groups to pass the Fair Share Amendment on the ballot in 2022.

In summary, the Fair Share Amendment would add an additional 4% tax on individuals when they make more than one million dollars over the course of a single year. For the first million dollars they would be taxed like everyone else at 5%, but on every dollar after that initial million they would be taxed at 9%. This additional tax revenue would be earmarked specifically for the funding of public transportation and infrastructure, along with funding for our public schools and universities. It is estimated that this tax would bring in approximately \$2 billion dollars in funding to Massachusetts annually.

The journey to get the Fair Share Amendment on the ballot in 2022 has been long and arduous, beginning back in 2015. Then the Fair Share Amendment struck a notable victory in June of 2019 when the first Constitutional Convention of Massachusetts voted 147-48 in favor of advancing the Amendment to the ballot. Then on June 9th 2021, as procedure dictated, the second Constitution Convention of Massachusetts re-confirmed the advancing of the Fair Share



Bristol County Chapter Members at New Bedford Rally



Kathy Paul speaks to Fair Share crowd in Lynn with North Shore members standing in support.

Amendment by a historic margin of 80% in favor. Even more cause for celebration, the Fair Share Amendment has a 70% favorable rating among voters in Massachusetts!

Our own member and Vice President of Mass Senior Action Kathy, Paul explained why she supports the Fair Share Amendment eloquently, "I have always been a big supporter of public transportation and the reason for being a supporter is because I needed it. My bus pass allowed me to go to my doctor appointments, visit my 5 children and grandchildren and be on the front line for the fight for justice. The senior and disabled van known as The RIDE was a lifeline for my husband, Bubba. Bubba was a veteran and lost his legs to diabetes and needed to use The RIDE to go to dialysis three times a week before we lost him." The importance of supporting equitable public transportation is clearly evident from Kathy's experiences.

As we all know, power protects power, and we are sure that dark monied interests will continue to push out false narratives and scare tactics to try and defeat the Fair Share Amendment in 2022. That is why Mass Senior Action's participation, along with the rest of our coalition partners, is so necessary. We need to inoculate voters before these smear campaigns take effect so that we win the ballot question next year. This campaign is already beginning to gear up throughout the state, where Fair Share is having campaign launches in over a dozen cities.

Respect Us! Protect Us! Pay Us!

Essential Workers Unite: Better Jobs = Better Care.

The pandemic brought a spotlight on workers who otherwise went unnoticed. Workers at the coffee shops, grocery stores, and home care workers. As a country we were forced to recognize these workers as essential. Now MSAC is joining groups across the country to stand with these workers as they seek the respect, protection and pay they deserve and earned.

First, let's talk about respect. As homecare workers, they don't have a typical employer, and the State never developed the support systems that most workers get from their jobs, like an Human Resource Function, benefits administration or training. Instead, there is a confusing system of programs that crisscross agencies. So when we talk about respect, we're talking about creating the support systems that exist at every other job. Can you imagine not getting your paycheck for an entire month? Some homecare workers deal with that far too often.

The second big issue is about protection. When COVID came around, the State had no plan for protecting essential, frontline workers like those many MSAC members depend on. Further, the State needs to establish an individualized plan of action for each consumer in the event of an emergency. It was left up to the dedication and ingenuity of the Homecare workers



Essential workers across the country are fighting to pass the American Jobs Plan which will invest 400 billion in jobs and training for homecare professionals.

to get to their consumers to address their needs safely.

And finally, we are fighting for the pay we deserve.

Homecare workers are paid by companies who contract with the state. In Massachusetts, anyone is able to start a homecare company and then be paid by the consumer or through the consumer's MassHealth or SCO insurance. These companies need to be regulated by the State to ensure the workers are trained and compensated appropriately.

President Biden's American Jobs Plan is a major investment in American infrastructure. What's different is that this plan includes caregiving as part of American infrastructure! Finally!

This is an opportunity to get it right. The American Jobs Plan invests millions in caregiving over the next decade. To expand access to long-term care services under

Medicaid. And to put in place an infrastructure to create good middle-class care jobs with a free and fair choice to join a union.

These investments will help hundreds of thousands of Americans finally obtain the long-term services and support they need, while creating new jobs with a trained and skilled workforce and offering caregiving workers a long-overdue raise, stronger benefits, and an opportunity to organize or join a union and collectively bargain.

This movement will be holding actions across the country beginning July 13 to bring pressure on those in the U.S. Senate against these investments. If you have family or friends in Kentucky, West Virginia, Arizona, or Maine - Ask them to call their Senators to tell them to stop the politics and invest in the care and jobs we need, pass the American Jobs Plan.

Lowering Senior Healthcare Cost Support is growing as process moves forward.

The Medicare Savings Programs (MSP) sub-committee has been hard at work since the state legislative session began in January. Mass Senior Action members continue to push for the expansion of MSP to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level by passing legislation (House Bill 1319 / Senate Bill 794). Here is a “by-the-numbers” look at what the sub-committee, along with the entire membership, has accomplished this year:

Virtual lobby day with over 100 attendees

67 House cosponsors on the MSP budget amendment

25 Senate cosponsors on the MSP budget amendment

70 House cosponsors and 14 Senate cosponsors on the MSP bill

26 meetings held with legislators and state officials

RAISE MSP ELIGIBILITY TO \$2167.00 SINGLE (\$2923.00 COUPLE) PER MONTH

**MEDICARE OUT OF POCKET COST COVERED:
PART B PREMIUM
PART D PREMIUM
CO-PAYS AND DEDUCTIBLES**

EXPANDING WILL BRING IN 200 MILLION OF FEDERAL FUNDING.

Clearly, momentum continues to grow as more members raise their voices and legislators listen. Over the summer months, the sub-committee is working to shore up support among House and Senate leadership to include MSP expansion in upcoming budget bills. We anticipate our bill will

have a committee hearing in September. The hearing will be an opportunity to show the widespread support for much-needed health care assistance. For more information or to get involved in the campaign for MSP expansion, contact organizer Eric Holmberg at 617-501-0648.

Current MSP Eligibility Income and Asset Limits (165% FPL)

You are:	Your income is at or below:	And your assets are at or below
Single Individual	\$1,774/mo	\$15,460
Married Couple	\$2,390/mo	\$23,200

Proposed Expanded MSP Eligibility Income and Asset Limits (200% FPL)

You are:	Your income is at or below:	Seeking to eliminate asset
Single Individual	\$2,167/ mo	
Married Couple	\$2,923./mo	


To Apply For MSP: Call: 1-800-841-2900 or go to the Mass.gov website: <https://tinyurl.com/Massmsp>

Food Access Victory

Single application for SNAP and healthcare

Mass Senior Action members and allies are celebrating a long-awaited victory with the addition of a SNAP checkbox to Medicare Savings Programs (MSP) and MassHealth paper applications. Effective July 1, the applications include a front page SNAP check-off option and will only require a single signature. If a MassHealth or MSP applicant checks the box on the first page, the application will be used for both SNAP and health coverage. Hundreds of thousands of eligible seniors will now have the opportunity to apply for nutritional assistance at the same time as health care assistance, helping to close the “SNAP gap.”

MSAC is working to make it simpler for even more eligible seniors to receive SNAP benefits. The next



Medicare Savings (Buy-In) Programs Application
for people who are eligible for Medicare

Who can use this application?

Individuals of any age who are receiving Medicare and are only seeking help with payment of their Medicare premiums and cost sharing. If you want to apply for other MassHealth benefits, (as well as assistance with Medicare costs), call MassHealth Customer Service at (800) 841-2900, TTY: (800) 497-4648 for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, or speech disabled for a different application. Please print clearly and fill out all sections.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) is a federal program that helps you buy healthy food each month.

Check this box if you want this application to be sent to the Department of Transitional Assistance to serve as an application for SNAP benefits. You must read the rights and responsibilities on pages 2 through 6 and sign on page 6 to proceed with the application.

General Information

Who is applying? you you and your spouse
If you and your spouse live together, you must also give us information about your spouse even if he or she is not applying for benefits.

You	Last name	First name	MI

step in this effort is to hold meetings with Senior Care Organizations to engage them around closing the SNAP gap. The committee is looking for Mass Senior Action members who are enrolled in Senior Care Options (SCO) plans to participate in these meetings. **If you are enrolled in one of the following SCO plans and would like to**

take part or learn more, please contact organizer Eric Holmberg at 617-501-0648: United HealthCare, Senior Whole Health, NaviCare, Tufts Health Plan, Commonwealth Care Alliance, Boston Medical Center HealthNet Plan.

Increase SNAP Amount and Eligibility! Preserve Pandemic Rate and Raise Income Limits

Increased SNAP benefit is the best way to combat food insecurity, the Covid rate should be the set amount.

Healthy and affordable food remains difficult to access.

Income qualification for SNAP are too low, leave out many low wage earners, citizenship should not determine food access.

Call your member of Congress: 202-225-3121.

Emergency SNAP Increase

All SNAP beneficiaries are eligible for the max amount

1 Person households will get \$234.00

2 Person households will get \$430.00

If you are already receiving SNAP this will be an automatic increase. If you do not receive SNAP or if your amount does not match, call the number below:

Call Project Bread: 1-800-645-8333

Public Transit For The People

New Investment brings opportunity - add your voice.

The MBTA will be entering a new chapter as the Fiscal Management and Control Board (FMCB), the MBTA governing body that has been in place since 2015, will be dissolving at the end of the month, without a concrete plan for its future governance body. Several proposals have been put forward by legislators, advocates and the current FMCB itself, many of which include two new seats at the table; a public transit rider and public transit worker.

In addition to this opening for change, the pandemic exposed how critical access to safe and reliable public infrastructure really is, and that our public systems can in fact function without burdening those that rely on them. From free bus fares in Los Angeles to free public transit for seniors in Miami, it can be done.

We can now seize this opportunity to take charge of the future of the MBTA and public transit in Massachusetts, by joining our partners in the Public Transit for Public Good campaign by passing the following legislation...

Call your State Senators and Representatives to co-sponsor: 617-722-2000.

For more information on the MSAC Transit Subcommittee contact MSAC: 617-722-1234.

**Call Your State Rep/
Senator to ask for support
on Transit Investment and
Public Governance over T
policy: 617-722-2000.**

Current Bills:

H.3526 An Act relative to low income transit fares

S.2265 An Act creating a New Deal for Transportation in the

Commonwealth

S.2386 An Act relative to the expansion of the commuter rail and ferry low-income fare program

H.3619 Resolve relative to implementing fare free service within the MBTA

S.2266/H.3542 An Act relative to transportation governance

H.2826/S.1812 An Act to Close Corporate Tax Loopholes and Create Progressive Revenue

H.2969 An Act relative to restoring corporate tax rates

S.1839 An Act relative to restoring corporate tax rates

H.3403/S.2340 An Act relative to fare free buses

Help pass the **Fair Share** Amendment (“Millionaire’s Tax”) in November 2022!

Take the MBTA survey to improve your transit options.

Too often, the MBTA cannot take us to the places that we need or want to get to, or simply isn’t the best option to get somewhere. To change this, the MBTA and MassDOT have launched the Better Bus Project, a project which seeks to make the bus system more effective and equitable for residents of Greater Boston. One part of the project is an online survey which collects information about the travel needs of the region’s residents: which

locations people want to be able to access by the MBTA, what residents’ experiences with taking the MBTA have been like, what MBTA improvements residents would like to see, etc.

Mass Senior Action Council has partnered with MassDOT and the MBTA to make sure that seniors’ voices are being heard loud and clear in this survey. This is extremely important since the survey results will directly affect the design of the new bus

network! Completing the short survey will allow Mass Senior Action members in the Greater Boston area to create a bus network that better serves their everyday lives and needs, regardless of where they live. Take the survey by calling MSAC at 781-864-2596 or to the MBTA Better Bus web page: <https://www.mbta.com/projects/better-bus-project/update/take-the-bus-network-redesign-travel-survey>

Join In The Action No Computer, No Internet, NO Problem!



**MSAC METRO NORTH MEMBERS
CONNECTING TO TAKE ACTION!**

**Call MSAC to add your voice:
617-284-1234**

Mass Senior Action has gone digital and we want you to come along with us. Problems like high healthcare costs, sky high rents, and unaffordable groceries didn't go away with the pandemic. Now more than ever, senior voices are needed

Call MSAC To Get Into The Action:

Staff Contact Info

For Assistance or More Information Please Call Us
 Carolyn Villers (617) 435-1926
 Pam Edwards (781) 864-2596
 Zach Boyer (508) 858-8167
 Tracey Carpenter..... (413) 328-4659
 Josie Hatuey (*Habla Español*) (617) 413-0460
 Alex Nadle.....(617) 284-1234
 Claudia Pérez (*Habla Español*) (857) 236-5719
 Eric Holmberg.....(617) 501-0648
 Shayla Fonfield.....(617)284-1234



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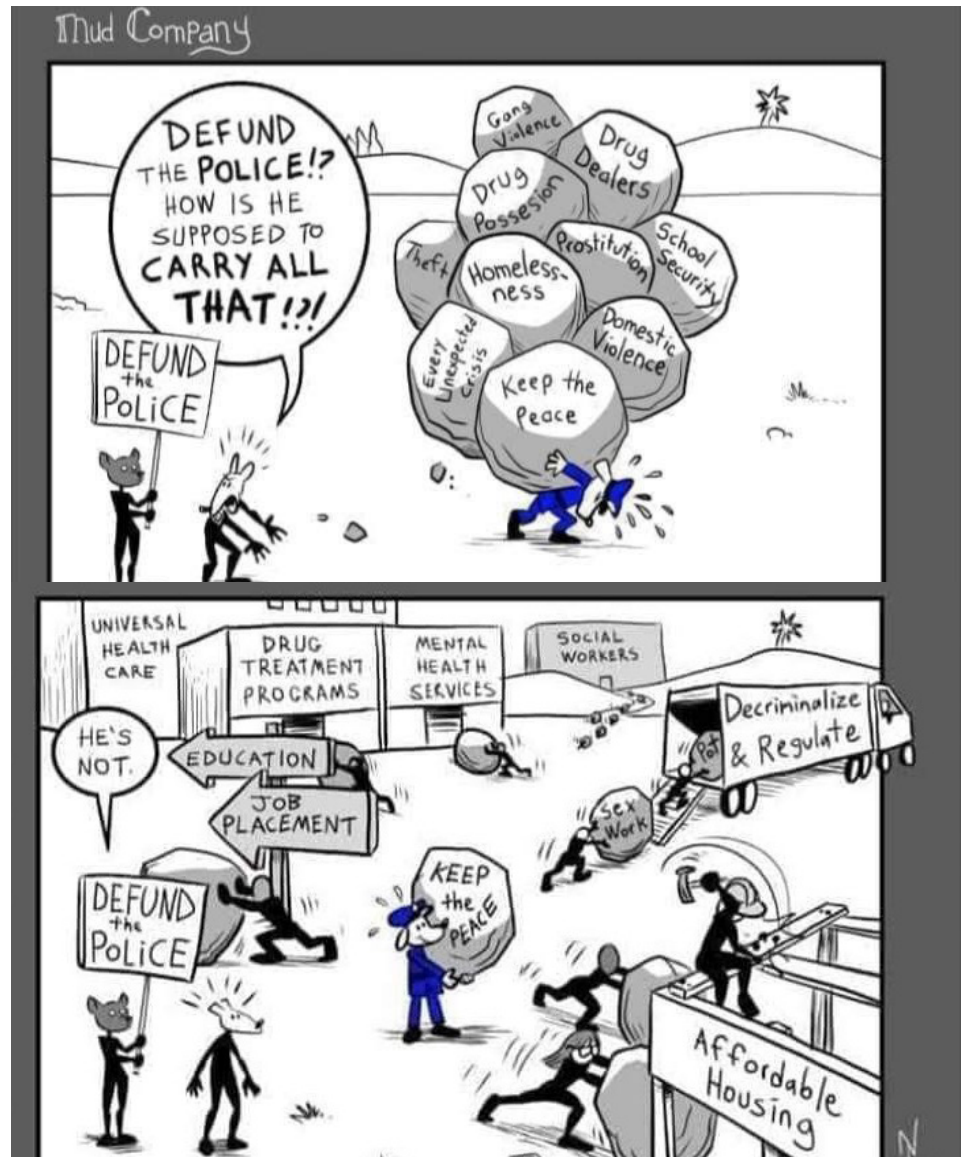
Reallocation cont'd from pg. 1

social services that can improve things such as mental health, addiction, and homelessness is a better use of taxpayer money. This approach further enhances the push to decriminalize and destigmatize people with mental health conditions and addiction problems. Some scholars, practitioners, and policymakers have said that this shift is long overdue.

Additionally, the research conducted with hundreds of police officers show that they respond to everything from potholes in the street to cats stuck up a tree. It could be argued, however, that reducing officer workload would increase the likelihood of solving violent crimes. Police officers are overworked and overstressed. Focusing on menial tasks throughout the day is inefficient and a waste of taxpayer money. Other government actors should be responsible for these and receive adequate funding for doing them.

HOMICIDE CLEARANCE RATE Police officers are not as successful as people think at solving violent crime. Approximately 38% of murders, 66% of rapes, 70% of robberies, and 47% of aggravated assaults go uncleared every year.”

More importantly, police stops relative to charges and convictions are relatively low. To show how egregious this is, a study of the NYPD stop-and-frisk program found that well over 90% of people stopped by the police were not committing any crime and did not have any contraband or weapons on



them. Overwhelmingly, the people stopped were Black and Latino, and physical force was used half the time. More police on the streets may be used to control the movement of Black bodies rather than solving crime. This is why the New York State Supreme Court ruled stop-and-frisk as unconstitutional. No-knock warrants and chokeholds should follow this pattern.

EDUCATION AND WORK INFRASTRUCTURE One consistent finding in the social science literature is that if we really want to reduce crime, education equity and the establishment of a work infrastructure is the best

approach. A study using 60 years of data found that an increase in funding for police did not significantly relate to a decrease in crime. Throwing more police on the street to solve a structural problem is one of the reasons why people are protesting in the streets. Defunding police—reallocating funding away from police departments to other sectors of government—may be more beneficial for reducing crime and police violence.

WHAT DEFUNDING LOOKS LIKE In recent weeks, some large

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Juneteenth Recognized As National Holiday

The history of the day:

January 1, 1863 Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation which declared all persons subject to slavery (about 3 million people) living in Confederate states be deemed free. However, the Proclamation did not instantly free slaves. The Proclamation only applied to those under Confederate control and not to slave-holding border states or rebel areas already under Union control.

Texas, however, continued the use of slavery as there were no presence of troops. After the Proclamation, many considered Texas (among other states) as a safe haven for slavery. As a result, two years after the Proclamation was declared, June 19, 1865 marks the day when federal troops stormed Texas and successfully ensured the freedom of ALL enslaved people.

As the celebration of new found freedom continued to spread around the states, June 19 became a day of

celebration known as Juneteenth Independence Day. The following year, June 19, 1866, marked the first official Juneteenth celebration. The original day included praying, dancing and singing spirituals.

Within a few years, Juneteenth became an annual tradition. Continuing into the 21st century, today, June 19, is a federal holiday. Juneteenth marks a day of celebration including religious services, educational events, social gatherings such as festivals etc. to recognize the end of slavery and to honour the culture and achievements of African Americans.

We applaud the effort to bring more recognition to the diverse history of the United States, however, it is important to remember that setting aside a holiday is no substitute for substantive action to reduce widespread racial disparities that continue to harm Black Americans. For example, Black Americans, particularly young men, are



more than twice as likely to be killed by police than white Americans. Although Black Americans account for 13 percent of the country's population, they account for more than a quarter of those killed by police. Acknowledging these types of disparities is a crucial part of reform efforts. Although the country is rightfully taking this moment to recognize and learn from our history, state and local officials should not be preventing educators from teaching about the inequality and discrimination that is part of our history.

Honoring Juneteenth is a tiny step in fully recognizing a long untold part of American history and should lead to bigger steps toward justice and equality.

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municipalities with a history of police brutality have reallocated funds in line with the defund police movement. Los Angeles will have at least \$100 million reallocated away from LAPD to programs for minority communities. San Francisco Mayor London Breed said that she will work with community groups

to re-prioritize funding. Baltimore City Council voted to reallocate \$22 million away from the police department's fiscal budget for 2021, which is typically over \$500 million. The city council plans to redirect the funding to recreational centers, trauma centers, and forgivable loans for Black-owned businesses.

Altogether, it is clear that

municipalities across the U.S. are making changes in line with the defund police movement. So, while the word "reallocate" may be a more palatable word, "defund" surely gets more attention on a protest sign. And more importantly, it seems to be having an impact. *contributed Rashawn RayFriday, June 19, 2020 in the Brookings*

Springfield Members Rally For Safety Call on Mayor Sarno to Remove Complicit Commissioner

June 9, 2021, In front of Springfield City Hall, under a hot midday sun, MSAC members led city residents in chants, songs, held signs, and spoke out against the racist policies of the Springfield Police Department led by Cheryl Clapprood.

The calls for Clapprood's ouster stem from an online meeting the police commissioner had with members of the Massachusetts Senior Action Council in April to discuss police reform. During the meeting, and in a follow-up letter to the organization, Clapprood was "defensive and dismissive" about allegations of racial bias within the police department, said Mattie Lacewell, the president of MSAC's Springfield chapter. "Making our neighborhoods safe for all will require new leadership," Lacewell said.

In a statement issued when MSAC members made their demand known, Clapprood said she is a strong and unwavering advocate for the men and women of the Springfield Police Department. She said great strides have been taken to make the agency more modern and progressive.

MSAC Springfield member, Bernice Ezell, responded to Clapprood's comments, "Her description of the police does not match what we have experienced. We cannot move forward without



acknowledging true reality"

One of the speakers at the rally was Kissa Walker, whose son Delano Walker Jr. was 15 when he was struck and killed by a passing car in 2009 after he was stopped and questioned by a Springfield Police Officer. She said it upset her that Clapprood in her comments tried to downplay the role police played in her son's death and it was a slap in the face to say we need to move on without acknowledging the past, "Do you think his life didn't matter? How dare you," Walker said.

In 2014, the city paid a \$1 million settlement to Walker's family after a federal court jury found his civil rights had been violated by police officer Sean Sullivan. The police department later promoted Sullivan

A letter was also delivered to Springfield Mayor Domenic Sarno from the Senior Action Council Wednesday calling

on him to fire Clapprood, said MSAC member Emurriel Holloway, "We come here today to call upon Mayor Sarno, who refers to himself as 'the people's mayor', and call on him for the immediate removal of Commissioner Cheryl Clapprood," Holloway said, "Your words mean nothing, your actions will show us everything."

Asked for comment, the mayor's spokesman issued a statement quoting Sarno as saying he had a "productive meeting" with Springfield City Council President Marcus Williams and Clapprood. "We had a very good and open dialogue on sensitivity issues and we plan to continue this dialogue on a regular basis," Sarno said.

Also speaking at the rally were City Councilors Trayce Whitfield and Justin Hurst, who has been an outspoken critic of Clapprood, "I personally stand with Mass

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Senior Action Council in calling for the resignation of Commissioner Cheryl Clapprod because their fight is my fight," Hurst said.

The meeting and rally came after a year of community members asking for reform following a 2018 Department of Justice Report revealed officers in the narcotics section of the Springfield, Mass., Police Department routinely violate the constitutional rights of citizens by using excessive force without accountability.

Springfield Police Department Narcotics officers "repeatedly punch individuals in the face unnecessarily, in part because they escalate encounters with civilians too quickly, and resort to unreasonable takedown maneuvers that, like head strikes, could reasonably be expected to cause head injuries," officials from the Justice Department's civil rights investigation wrote in a report of their two-year probe.

Justice Department officials found chronic problems with use of force, poor

record keeping and repeated failures to impose discipline for officer misconduct, Massachusetts U.S. Attorney Andrew Lelling said in a statement.

As of July, the Mayor has not changed leadership despite calls from the public with over 2500 residents signing a petition initiated by the community. Chapter President Lacewell explained part of the frustration, "Clapprod refuses to acknowledge the history of abuse and lacks the understanding of systemic racism, implicit bias, or white privilege. As Black and Brown elders in our communities, it is clear to us that Commissioner Clapprod is not the person to lead the department toward meaningful reform."

Members call on Mayor Sarno to do the right thing for the community and remove Commissioner Clapprod. If Mayor Sarno will not listen to the people of Springfield, we ask "The People's Mayor" to address the findings in the report and remove the leadership that allowed this inexcusable behavior by law enforcement.



**Add Your
Voice To
The Fight
for Justice In
Springfield.**

**Contact MSAC:
tcarpenter@
masssenioraction.
org**

or 413-328-4659

**"Mayor Sarno,
your words mean
nothing. Your
actions show us
everything." ...**

Emurriel Holloway



Above: Chapter President Lacewell leads the crowd to City Hall steps to tell Mayor Sarno to remove Commissioner Clapprod.

YWCA 21 Day Challenge for Racial Equity

A fundamental part of Mass Senior Action's mission is to fight against all forms of racism, conscious and unconscious; and to ensure all of our communities have equitable opportunities and access. As we recognize America's legacy of Institutionalized Racism and its continued harm, we stand together to call out and dismantle systemic barriers to health and economic security. Through our continued work to incorporate a racial lens in all of our campaigns and committees, we connected with the YWCA and participated in their "21 Day Challenge for Racial Equity".

As the saying goes, it takes 21 days to form a habit. Participants received one e-mail per day over the course of twenty one days that had a few 'challenges' aimed at educating participants on the history and current situation within the struggle for racial equity. These challenges were curated by the YWCA to help participants develop the stamina needed to continue in the pursuit of their racial equity journey, to encourage others to do the same and to take action! The challenges ranged from 10 minute podcasts, illuminating TED talks, scholarly articles with facts and statistics, and news articles. These challenges covered a wide range of topics associated with racial equity and the empowerment of communities of color, such as: Anti-racism, White Privilege, equity vs.



equality, intersectionality, housing segregation, red-lining, Implicit Bias, school segregation and the school to prison pipeline, crime & justice reform, and systemic racism and health disparities.

At the end of each week's set of daily challenges, members and staff joined together to discuss and debrief. These conversations were insightful and productive, with many members sharing their own personal experiences within the struggle for racial equity and shared how they have grown to be more anti-racist by addressing their own personal implicit biases. It became very clear that Mass Senior Action, with the help of the YWCA, has continued our pursuit to eliminate racism, empower people of color and women, and to promote peace, justice, freedom & dignity for all. Several MSAC participants expressed interest in finding a way to share what they learned and realized to others. Lynnette Laveau-Saxe, MSAC Cambridge/Somerville member, suggested, "These videos and discussions should be available at our monthly chapter meetings. This information and the personal experiences need to be shared so we have the

tools to address the systemic racism affecting all of us and is the root of so many of the challenges we face and try to change."

The challenge was appropriately overlapped with the celebration of Juneteenth, the day that freedom was officially declared for all men and women of color within the United States. Of course that does not mean that the continued impact and perpetuation of institutionalized racism was over, rather an important step in our continued pursuit of "liberty and justice for all". As we come together to celebrate Juneteenth, we must also take the opportunity to think about and address the continued issues associated with racial equity within our own communities.

Moving forward, we hope to use this information and insight to incorporate a racial lens into all of our work, from campaigns to committees & legislation, so that we can continue dismantling systemic racism and move towards racial and economic equity for all.

Contact MSAC for the links to the materials or to include the presentations in your chapter area.

20 Attorney Generals Fight Postal Service Cuts. Supporters and Workers call for the removal of Postmaster DeJoy.

Attorneys general from 20 states have sent a document to the Postal Regulatory Commission calling on it to reject Postmaster General Louis DeJoy's plan to delay first-class mail, which they warn could delay essential services and make it harder for officials to administer elections.

The statement says that the postal commission should be focused on undoing the problems with the United States Postal Service (USPS) caused largely by DeJoy's actions from last year, not creating new problems with the service.

The group of state and local officials points out that mail delays and sweeping changes implemented by the embattled postmaster last year were found by four different federal judges to be unlawful. Delays to service made by DeJoy in 2020 — seemingly with the goal of disenfranchising voters ahead of the presidential election, as some have stated — plunged the USPS into crisis.

The statement details changes to “degrade service standards” DeJoy is planning to make, like significantly slowing first-class mail. “[The Postal Service] seeks to implement these changes, despite never having restored service to its prior levels following the disastrous July 2020 initiatives and while the country still recovers

SAVE THE PEOPLES POSTAL SERVICE!

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Contact President Biden: Remove DeJoy Now! Fill The Board Seats! www.whitehouse.gov/contact

from the COVID-19 pandemic and accompanying economic downturn.”

But the USPS doesn't have to keep spiraling down, the government officials write. “The Commission should urge the Postal Service to abandon this misguided effort and instead focus its attention on improving its performance in delivering First-Class Mail and other market-dominant products,” the statement reads. “Only once the Postal Service has shown that it can reliably meet its performance targets should it consider whether it is necessary to change its service standards.

The proposed changes would also harm the ability of the Postal Service to carry out its mission of serving all communities in the U.S., especially the rural and underserved, the officials write. They point to an analysis showing a slowdown in the mail service under DeJoy's new plan in 36 of the contiguous 48 states, in-state mail would also be slower.

This wouldn't only affect

individuals' and businesses' ability to send and receive mail — it would also be detrimental to the government's ability to carry out services like food stamps and Medicaid. State governments rely on the normally swift and reliable service of the USPS, they point out, to issue official documents like birth and death certificates, driver's license documents, voter registration and absentee ballots. All of these services could end up impacted by DeJoy's plan, they write, and contrary to the Postal Service's purpose, these changes would disproportionately affect people in rural areas and small towns.

“Postmaster General DeJoy wants to lead the USPS in making further service cuts that would only result in more delays,” said New York Attorney General Letitia James, “The Postal Regulatory Commission should reject these changes and direct the USPS to take action to resume USPS service to what it once was.”

Senior Homeowner Property Tax Deduction

Members of the Massachusetts Senior Action Council (MSAC) established a Property Tax Committee due to the many senior property owners and issues with the ongoing increases of property taxes throughout the Commonwealth. In one particular meeting, discussion on the Senior Circuit Breaker came up. So what exactly is it? The Senior Circuit Breaker is a tax credit incentive that is based off of the actual real estate taxes paid on a residential property one owns or rents and occupies as one's principal residence. One can claim a refundable credit upon filing your state income tax returns nevertheless, there are eligibility guidelines one has to meet in order to receive a refundable credit. These are as follows:

You must be a Massachusetts resident or part-year resident.

You must be 65 or older by January 1, 2021.

You must file a Massachusetts personal income tax return.

You must own or rent residential property in Massachusetts and occupy it as your primary residence.

For tax year 2020, your total Massachusetts income doesn't exceed:

\$61,000 for a single individual who is not the head of a household.

\$76,000 for a head of household.

\$92,000 for married couples

filing a joint return.

If you are a homeowner, your Massachusetts property tax payments, together with half of your water and sewer expense, must exceed 10% of your total Massachusetts income for the tax year.

If you are a renter, 25% of your annual Massachusetts rent must exceed 10% of your total Massachusetts income for the tax year.

In the 2020 tax year, the maximum credit amount was \$1,150.00. If the credit you were owed surpassed the amount of total tax payable for that year, you would have been refunded the additional amount of the credit without any interest acquired. However, you first have to apply for the Circuit Breaker Tax Credit as it is not automatic. If you are eligible, you would simply complete Schedule CB on your personal Massachusetts state income tax return. One mistake property owners make in being denied this tax credit is by claiming the entire portion of the real estate taxes and water and sewage charges that apply to the whole property—especially if it is a multi-unit family home. To avoid this mistake, be certain to only claim the portion of the entire bill that pertains to your portion of the property if you are renting out a unit(s). To get more information on the Senior Circuit Breaker, contact the tax department at: (617) 887-6367 or Toll Free at: 1 (800) 392-6089.



Circuit Breaker Exemption For Senior Homeowners.

You must be a Massachusetts resident or part-year resident.

You must be 65 or older by January 1, 2021.

You must file a Massachusetts personal income tax return.

You must own or rent residential property in Massachusetts and occupy it as your primary residence.

For tax year 2020, your total Massachusetts income doesn't exceed:

\$61,000 for a single individual who is not the head of a household.

\$76,000 for a head of household.

\$92,000 for married couples filing a joint return.

MSAC Jumps Into Action In J.P

Greedy developer attempts to block senior housing

Bostonians are in desperate need of more truly affordable housing!

Boston's current housing policy ensures that it's housing market will remain exactly that, a MARKET. There are more than 10,000 applicants to Section 8 housing every year in Massachusetts and every time subsidized housing is built, the applications pile up by the thousands for buildings that at best are counted in the hundreds, and usually less.

The City of Boston currently has one of the lowest "affordable" housing requirements for private developers of any major city in the country, at a measly 13% (20% in New York and in neighboring Cambridge). Unfortunately the word affordable really must be in quotes, because the income level for the "affordable" units required of developers

starts at roughly \$57,000 a year for an individual, living in a one bedroom apartment. This \$57,000 represents a person earning 70% of the Area Median Income (AMI) for the Metropolitan Statistical Area of Boston, which extends to high income areas such as Brookline, Newton, Milton and even Nashua County in New Hampshire, greatly skewing the true median income of Bostonians upward, and even more so when looking at the true median income of neighborhoods predominantly of color.

While there are groups such as the Coalition for a Truly Affordable Boston who are demanding 33% affordable units at an average of 40% AMI in every mayoral candidate forum, the fight to keep the few low income housing developments being proposed from being derailed by greedy investors continues everyday.

As you read this, 38 units of senior housing in Jamaica Plain, with rents starting at 30% AMI and rising no higher than 60% AMI, is under attack by the neighboring landlord Monty Gold and their tenant, Turtle Swamp Brewing, for nothing more than a couple of inconsequential zoning codes



Join MSAC members at Turtle Swamp Brewery, 3373 Washington Street to stop the block! Contact MSAC to confront the turtle

overlooked by the Boston Planning and Development Agency, who has already approved the project.

City Life/Vida Urbana and it's members have started to rally in defense of the project, and so will soon be the Mass Senior Action Council! On select dates in the summer, MSAC members and staff will be greeting the Turtle Swamp's bar clientele with flyers about how Monty Gold and his swamp of cowardly turtles are keeping low income seniors out of Boston.

Now's the time to break out of our pandemic SHELL and stand up for seniors' right to the city!

Contact MSAC to stop this greedy grab: 617-284-1234 or info@masssenioraction.org.



Developer Monty Gold and Turtle Swamp Brewery Owner, John Lincecum pictured above, filed a lawsuit to block a neighborhood plan to build 38 units of affordable senior housing in J.P.

Members Seek Equity In Housing

Over the past six months, our newly developed Chinese Speaking Committee has been working on Language Access within our Metro North chapter, specifically in Malden. Language Access has been steadily developing within Mass Senior Action over the years, with the Chinese Speaking Committee and the Spanish Committee hosting monthly meetings on issues specific to their communities.

Back in Malden, Mass Senior Action's Chinese Speaking Committee has been working with Greater Boston Legal Services, the Malden Housing Authority and Mystic Valley Elder Services to give residents access to equitable language services within their community. In June, MSAC and the Malden Housing Authority had a meeting that went over three hours long to discuss the job description for a multi-lingual housing manager, the role that the manager would play interacting with residents, and the potential candidates for the position. Mass Senior Action's Malden chapter president attended the meeting along with the Chinese Speaking Committee's leader Peter Huang, in order to make sure that the voice of the residents was heard and that they had an opportunity to speak on what was important to them with language access.

This meeting was part of a growing trend of activism for Mass Senior Action to put forward roles in our community that focus

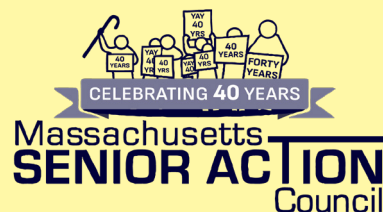


Above: Malden members with Mayor Christenson working to improve language access.

Photo taken pre-pandemic.

on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion of all residents. In 2020 Mass Senior Action worked with Mayor Gary Christenson of Malden to create and hire a Diversity Equity & Inclusion (DEI) coordinator for the Mayor's office, and recently played a role in hiring their new Senior Center Coordinator. As residents of the community and members of MSAC, we know it is our responsibility to advance the voices of our members and the most vulnerable in our community. The organizing work and behind the scenes collaboration with other groups such as Greater Boston Legal Services, which helped us gather data on the languages of residents in Malden's public housing, demonstrate how effective a group of concerned citizens and activists can be in seeing their vision of a more equitable community come to fruition.

For more information contact MSAC at 617-284-1234 or zboyer@masssenioraction.org



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**ANNOUNCING
MSAC BIENNIAL**

**FALL 2021
CONVENTION**

Date and Location to be
determined

Statewide Officer Election,
Workshops, and determine the
organizational priorities.

Meet The Members: Greater Springfield: Bernice Ezell

Bernice Ezell along with her husband Bobby are lifetime members of Mass Senior Action Council. Bernice serves on the board of the Greater Springfield Chapter as the board secretary.

Her work as an Adult Nurse Practitioner in Brightwood Health Center has been instrumental in the chapter efforts to better understand some of the impacts of disparities in our healthcare system. As we know, the first step to taking action on a cause is becoming informed. Bernice has provided the chapter members with well-informed conversations about health issues and shares her knowledge with members and others in our

community. Her commitment to ensure that the community employs efforts to eradicate health disparities. She is an advocate for community-driven solutions and a voice for people most impacted at the center.

Recently, Bernice has been working with our small but mighty police reform sub-committee to address systemic racism in the Springfield Police Department. Bernice spoke to the crowd at the recent June 9th Police reform rally to call on the Springfield Mayor to remove the current police commissioner because as she said, “We must move forward, envisioning a compassionate future that



promises greater safety, particularly for all those who are most vulnerable. We envision the hope and love of the Springfield community which acknowledges each other’s humanity. We recognize the intrinsic value of every member of the human family, to achieve justice, healing and redemption.”

Essential Workers Honored In Lynn

May Day 2021 — Mass Senior Action Council joined local labor and community organization members in a drive-by parade saluting essential workers and immigrants on the coronavirus front lines.

The parade saluted employees at Lynn Community Health Center, My Brother’s Table, City Hall, Salvation Army, Lynn Teachers Union, and area grocery stores, fire stations, post offices and the River Works.

“Workers in healthcare, first responders and grocery



clerks are usually invisible and ignored. Today, the public understands that they are on the front lines, doing their jobs every day to keep us safe and fed,” said Maria Carrasco, New Lynn

Coalition president.

Labor organizations traditionally observe May Day as a benchmark for recognizing workplace condition improvements.



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**Thank you to those who have been, became, or
will be MSAC monthly supporters.**

\$10.00 per month pays for WIFI to allow a member to participate by video

\$25.00 per month pays for transportation for 5 members to a meeting.

\$40.00 per month pays for phone communications to members.

**\$100.00 per month pays for 2000 newsletters to share information and
opportunities to seniors across the state.**

**Any amount is greatly appreciated and important to MSAC’s
social justice work.**

***40 Years of Building A Voice For
Seniors and Their Families.***