

For Immediate Release

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Consumer Protection Advocates Applaud the Senate's Passage of the Family Financial Protection Act, Call on House to Pass

Boston, July 15, 2016 - In response to the Massachusetts Senate passing the Family Financial Protection Act, community advocates issued the following statement:

"We applaud the leadership of the Senate, especially lead sponsor Senator Jamie Eldridge, in passing the Family Financial Protection Act (S146) by a vote of 29-9. Abuses in the debt collection process are widespread. 23 percent of Massachusetts residents have debts in collection, with an average debt of \$4,600. Massachusetts residents deserve a fair and transparent process to repay their debts, which the current system doesn't allow. The current system allows out-of-state debt buyers to file large numbers of debt collection cases, straining our local court system, often in pursuit of debts that may not be collectible because they are too old, or may not be fully accurate. Residents are trapped by exorbitant fees, wage garnishment, and/or arrest warrants during this process, often leaving them in financial ruin.

We have to stop allowing debt buyers from benefiting from an unregulated system at the expense of our residents. Families facing hardship from unemployment or medical expenses, deserve more; they deserve the security of the Family Financial Protection Act. Since 2009, seven states have changed their laws to protect consumers from debt collection abuses, and Massachusetts should be next. **We urge the House to follow the Senate's lead for swift passage to protect consumers in Massachusetts and our economy."**

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Advocates include The Midas Collaborative, Economic Mobility Pathways, Greater Boston Legal Services, the National Consumer Law Center on behalf of its low-income clients, the Center for Responsible Lending, and the Jewish Community Relations Council.

- [The Midas Collaborative](#) advances the financial security of low and moderate income residents across Massachusetts in collaboration with its member organizations and other partners.
- [Economic Mobility Pathways \(EMPath\)](#) transforms lives by helping people move out of poverty and provides the tools for other institutions to systematically do the same.
- [Greater Boston Legal Services](#) provides free legal assistance and representation to low-income families in Boston and 31 surrounding cities and towns to help them secure some of the most basic necessities of life.
- [The National Consumer Law Center](#) works for consumer justice and economic security for low-income and other disadvantaged people, including older adults, in the U.S.
- [The Center for Responsible Lending](#) is a nonprofit, non-partisan organization that works to protect homeownership and family wealth by fighting predatory lending practices.
- [The Jewish Community Relations Council's](#) purpose is to define and advance the values, interests and priorities of the organized Jewish community of Greater Boston in the public square.