

**CONGRESSWOMAN AYANNA PRESSLEY**  
**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS**  
**MEMBER DAY TESTIMONY**

June 9, 2021

Thank you, Chairwoman DeLauro, and Members of the Committee, for the opportunity to testify on my priorities for the Fiscal Year 2022 Appropriations bill.

I am grateful for the opportunity to bring needed resources to the Massachusetts 7<sup>th</sup> district through community projects and welcome the opportunity to highlight ten strong initiatives with robust community support that will go a long way in addressing unmet health and education needs, investing in local jobs, ensuring an equitable economic recovery, and addressing the climate crisis.

**Improving Healthcare and Substance Use Treatment Resources**

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the stark inequities in our health care system and in the disparate health outcomes across demographics. In a wellness assessment in the Town of Randolph, a community home to a majority of people of color, residents described longstanding barriers to health care services including transportation, long waits, and shortages of providers that accept public insurance. To address this need, I have requested funding to cover the cost of construction of a **school-based health center at Randolph high school**. This project will bring much needed accessible, trusted, and experienced health care services to residents.

With substance use and drug overdoses rising in recent decades, and particularly during the pandemic, I have submitted a request for **the Dimock Center in Roxbury, to increase the availability of critically needed substance use treatment** and programming by creating a new 16-bed treatment unit. This project would provide approximately 300 people annually with vital step-down services after detoxification and assist patients in sustaining wellness, obtaining jobs, reuniting with loved ones, and leading healthy lives.

**Supporting Educators and Culturally Competent Learning**

Every child deserves an education that meets their individual learning needs, whether it's personalized curricula or culturally responsive reading materials. I have put forward projects on behalf of **Randolph Public Schools** and **Milton Public Schools** which will go a long way in ensuring students, including children of color, children from lower income families, English language learners, and children with disabilities, receive a quality education that prepares them for college and careers of their choice.

The pandemic has had a devastating impact on Black and Latinx youth enrollment in community colleges, with some estimating that their numbers could fall by up to 30% by this coming fall. I

am requesting funding to expand the **Boston Tuition Free Community College program** to cover tuition and related expenses for low and moderate-income students to complete certain certificate programs at one of six partner community and technical colleges in Greater Boston. These funds will be used to provide last-dollar funding tuition support, a stipend for books and transportation, and access to a network of academic coaches. This project will increase access to new career paths with increased wages and opportunities for advancement.

### **Addressing Local Unemployment, Creating Jobs**

Last summer, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts had the highest unemployment rate in the country, and the jobs recovery since then has left Black, brown, and low-income families behind. This is especially true in the city of Chelsea, where additional resources are needed to get people back to work. That's why I am requesting funding to help a local organization, Chelsea Collaborative, launch a **pipeline project as part of the city-wide workforce development action plan to rapidly re-employ Latinx and immigrant workers** who have experienced under- and unemployment because of the pandemic.

I am also seeking funding to help a Minority Serving Institution in my district, **the Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology, launch a new green jobs Building Automation System certificate program** to meet the needs of the growing clean energy economy and provide good paying jobs in the field to their student population, comprised of 74% people of color, 99% receiving financial aid, and 57% first-generation college students, all with an average household income of approximately \$23,000.

### **Mitigating Local Impacts of the Climate Crisis**

The Island End River area is home to 15,000 low income residents who are primarily people of color, as well as the New England Produce Center and major energy facilities. Coastal flooding resulting from sea level rise and record storms threaten homes, livelihoods, and needed infrastructure. The funding I requested for the **Island End River Regional Coastal Flood Resiliency Project** would bring Chelsea and Everett, towns that have been long denied environmental justice, much closer to preventing further climate change-related disaster.

I have also requested funding to advance the **Poplar Street Pump Station and ArtFarm project** in Somerville, to provide critical stormwater climate change management infrastructure and create needed community space.

Finally, expanding bicycle lanes has many benefits including improving health and reducing pollution and traffic. I have requested funding to expand the network of **separated bicycle facilities** across Cambridge, which will improve the safety of cyclists, the connectivity to major employment areas, and promote biking as an alternative to other modes of transportation.

Those in my district closest to the pain will always be my greatest asset, partner, and counsel as I work to advance our priorities in Congress. These community-supported projects would measurably improve the lives of my constituents and I request that you give them the strongest consideration.