

## **Mass Save Our Homes Campaign Wins Support from Massachusetts Congressional delegation, moves US Senator Scott Brown (R-MA)**

The national campaign to stop the HUD budget cuts has made significant progress in Massachusetts. The Mass Save Our Homes Coalition has lined up strong support from the Massachusetts Congressional delegation. Following Coalition letters to all 10 Massachusetts Representatives and both Senators in January, more than 150 tenants and supporters rallied on Valentine's Day at the office of Sen. Brown, after a Boston City Council hearing. Rally news-clips, photos and the Council's resolution can be viewed on the National Alliance of HUD Tenants (NAHT) website: [www.saveourhomes.org](http://www.saveourhomes.org).

In response, on March 28, the Massachusetts Congressional delegation issued a sign on letter to Congressional leaders urging full funding for HUD programs. The letter was signed by all delegation members except for Sen. Brown. Anticipating the letter, Brown issued a letter on March 18 urging priority to "HUD rental housing programs" but slamming the Administration for allegedly prioritizing aid to homeowners. The Mass Alliance of HUD Tenants (MAHT) then delivered 350 postcards from Georgetowne tenants (an expiring use building in Boston) to Brown on March 23 demanding a meeting to discuss further actions.

Brown agreed to meet with Save Our Homes coalition representatives in his DC office on March 31. The day of the meeting, a Boston Herald columnist filed a stinging column challenging Brown for not signing onto the MA delegation letter and trying to straddle the fence on cuts. Brown met for 45 minutes with Peggy Santos from the Mass Union of Public Housing Tenants (MUPHT), Shams Mitza from the Alliance of Cambridge Tenants, and Michael Kane from MAHT/NAHT. (Several members of the Boston Resident Advisory Board met Senator Brown briefly before the meeting started but had to leave to catch a plane).

As a result of the column and the meeting, Brown issued a new, stronger statement in support of housing, energy and other programs benefiting the poor. Significantly, he also delivered a Senate Floor speech with the same message, earning the wrath of "Tea Party" leaders, who were holding a rally in DC the same day demanding deeper cuts.

View the Scott Brown letter & Senate Floor Statement on March 31:

<http://www.scottbrown.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2011/3/scott-brown-letter-to-senate-leadership-on-the-ongoing-budget-negotiations>

Ms. Santos also hand delivered a letter from MUPHT and BHA Director Bill McGonagle inviting Brown to tour Boston BHA developments, which he agreed to

do. He also agreed to continue working with MAHT/NAHT to secure an amendment extending Enhanced Vouchers to Georgetowne and other at-risk HUD developments and allowing their conversion to Project Based Vouchers to preserve affordability.

Brown's Senate speech attracted national attention, along with Tea Party denunciations. See articles:

- POLITICO.com: Scott Brown blasts 'irresponsible' cuts:  
<http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0411/52367.html>  
Tea Party Leader Lashes Out at Scott Brown:  
<http://www.politico.com/news/stories/0411/52391.html>
- See April 2 coverage of Brown's position from Boston Globe:  
Brown Walking Fine Line on Budget Cuts:  
[http://www.boston.com/news/politics/articles/2011/04/02/brown\\_walking\\_fine\\_line\\_on\\_budget\\_cuts/?comments=all#readerComm](http://www.boston.com/news/politics/articles/2011/04/02/brown_walking_fine_line_on_budget_cuts/?comments=all#readerComm)

**Congratulations to the tenant leaders, organizers, and allies who have helped to get us this far! Our victory in moving Sen. Brown has had a national impact.**