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## **Editorial: Massachusetts needs to move homeless out of hotels and into apartments**

By [The Republican Editorials](#)

May 21, 2010, 12:30AM

Apart from the fact that it puts a roof over the heads of some of the state's neediest residents, placing homeless families in hotels and motels has been a failure.

Millions of dollars that could have been put to more fruitful uses – such as keeping people on the verge of homelessness in their homes – have instead gone to keeping the homeless out of the weather and on the margins of society.

Help may be on the way. The state Senate's proposed budget for fiscal 2011 includes [\\$3.5 million](#) that could help put homeless families in efficiency apartments.

Massachusetts currently pays about \$2 million a month to house the homeless in hotels and motels, even though it is cheaper and more productive to place the homeless in apartments.

Communities where the hotels are located have seen increases in education and school transportation costs, not to mention increased crime.

A recent incident in Chicopee in which police said a 24-year-old hotel resident offered to give his 3-month-old daughter to a stranger in exchange for beer or crack cocaine highlights the problems faced by authorities.

While both the state and homeless advocates are working to move the homeless into apartments (nearly 1,200 have moved to apartments from hotels and shelters between August and February), the task is not easy.

"We have to convert all the money spent on hotels to be spent on solutions," Dennis M. Culhane, a national expert on homelessness, told officials during a recent conference on homelessness in Holyoke.

And that's where the Senate's \$3.5 million could help.

An apartment can provide a base where a person can build a more stable life. A hotel is a place to remain rootless. Let's use our money to help people put down roots.