

Sutton fire a warning for Massachusetts Gov. Healey that she is placing migrants' lives in jeopardy

"Last week, I sent a letter to Governor Healey outlining concerns of Sutton Public Safety Officials in regards to her plan to house migrants at the Red Roof Inn in Sutton.

Attached to the letter was 143 pages of police reports from incidents at the hotel, a June 6, 2023 letter from her Executive Office of Public Safety stating the hotel's 911 system was not compliant with state code and was "endangering your guests, employees and the public," and an email from Sutton's Fire Chief about SFD's inability to fight a potential fire at the motel due to the lack of a public water source.



Ryan Fattman photo.

Today, those safety fears turned into reality: six local fire departments were deployed to the hotel when a fire broke out

during a cooking incident. The fire resulted in three individuals receiving medical attention and fire damage to the second floor of the motel.

I was en route to the Red Roof Inn to meet with Town Officials and the National Guardsmen deployed by the Healey Administration when the fire broke out. I arrived as several local Fire Departments responded to the call. I could not be more proud in witnessing the calm and organized response of Chief Belsito, the Sutton Fire and Police Departments, and local public safety officials from throughout the Blackstone Valley.

I also can not adequately express my anger with the Administration's failure to conduct public safety due diligence necessary to protect the stakeholders involved in this migrant shelter crisis.



Ryan Fattman photo.

People's lives, from vulnerable migrants to our first responders, have been jeopardized by the lack of forethought and preparation by the Commonwealth in taking on this issue. This is unacceptable. It's my sincere hope that this fire will

serve as a wake up call to the Healey Administration to take the concerns of local Public Safety Officials, and the migrants they are hosting, seriously.”-Ryan Fattman.

From MassFiscal.org:

Governor Healey’s politically motivated policies could very easily have cost people their lives yesterday.

If Massachusetts had the capacity to take care of these people, we wouldn’t be warehousing them in unsafe hotels in remote, rural parts of the state. Before yesterday’s fire, the Governor was warned by local legislators Senator Ryan Fattman and State Representative Joseph McKenna of the problematic situation. The Governor ignored their warning, and a fire broke out that put many in danger. The Governor needs to stop playing politics and call on President Biden to secure the southern border.

“Following a fire at a dilapidated hotel in Sutton, MA that is now being used by the state to house the massive influx of migrants pouring over the country’s open southern border, the Massachusetts Fiscal Alliance warned Governor Maura Healey that next time, the consequences could be much worse.



Ryan Fattman photo.

“Governor Healey’s politically motivated policies could very easily have cost people their lives yesterday. If Massachusetts had the capacity to take care of these people, we wouldn’t be warehousing them in unsafe hotels in remote, rural parts of the state. Before yesterday’s fire, the Governor was warned by local legislators Senator Ryan Fattman and State Representative Joseph McKenna of the problematic situation. The Governor ignored their warning, and a fire broke out that put many in danger. The Governor needs to stop playing politics and call on President Biden to secure the southern border. This lack of leadership is having many negative consequences,” said Paul D. Craney, a spokesman for the Massachusetts Fiscal Alliance.

The near-disaster at the Sutton hotel comes just days after Senator Fattman and Representative McKenna penned a letter to the Governor outlining several public safety concerns with the site, including a non-functioning 911 phone system and concerns from the Sutton Fire Chief that the hotel was too far from water main access in the case of a blaze. The letter also pointed out that the Healey administration’s own Executive Office of Public Safety had cited the hotel in both May and

June over the non-compliant 911 system and stated they were, "endangering your guests, employees and the public."

"People's lives, from vulnerable migrants to our first responders, have been jeopardized by the lack of forethought and preparation by the Commonwealth. This is unacceptable. It's my sincere hope that this fire will serve as a wake up call to the Healey Administration to take the concerns of local Public Safety Officials, and the migrants they are hosting, seriously," stated Senator Fattman in a post on his office's Facebook page.

"This is just the latest in a string of political theatrics designed to placate Healey's political base rather than addressing the underlying problem behind the overwhelming flood of migrants that have maxed out the Commonwealth's capacity to absorb. Instead of actually addressing the root cause of the problem, which is a failure of Democrat's immigration and border policies, Governor Healey has been play-acting at a response. She's declared a state of emergency, but has taken no emergency actions with the declaration. She's mobilized the national guard, but has them acting as hospitality workers instead of deploying them to assist at the border. There simply aren't enough places to house all of these people and no number of soldiers are going to fix that issue if they're staying here in the Commonwealth," noted Craney.

"We've repeatedly said this issue was going to get much, much worse if we continue down this track and we're already beginning to see that. Yesterday people were hurt and many could have lost their lives. It's time for Governor Healey to stop the political theater and take meaningful action that will address this crisis where it is happening—at our country's unsecured southern border," closed Craney."-MassFiscal.org.



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
General Court
State House, Boston, MA 02133-1054

September 7, 2023

Governor Maura Healey
Massachusetts State House
24 Beacon St, Room 280
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Healey,

We are writing to you to express our sincere concern about the recent handling of asylum-seeking migrants in the Town of Sutton (as part of your declared State Emergency on August 8, 2023).

As you are aware, on Sunday, August 27 more than 50 migrants were relocated to the Red Roof Inn in Sutton. According to communications between the hotel management and Sutton's public safety officials, the Commonwealth contracted 18 hotel rooms at The Red Roof Inn nearly two weeks prior to the migrants August 27th arrival. The Town of Sutton was only notified on Friday, August 25, in an email that was sent after business hours, when town employees had all gone home for the weekend.

Since this group's arrival to Sutton, town officials and residents have graciously rallied to help the migrant families by providing food, water, basic hygiene products, and essentials for small children, such as diapers and formula. The town and community members came to the aide of the migrants, humanizing their needs in the dire circumstances they faced. This was done in lieu of state support until your Administration was able to stabilize the communication and managerial issues that were originally lacking. It is fair to note, your Legislative Affairs Office and the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities recognized the State's failure to organize and lack of support, they apologized, and they have communicated with State and Town officials on one conference call in the past ten days. This communication needs to happen on a more regular basis, as we still have many questions and must express points of concern as the emergency shelter program continues to impact communities and constituents we represent:

Public Safety Due Diligence:

Attached you will find dozens of pages of police reports from the Town of Sutton and a letter from your Executive Office of Public Safety and Security regarding safety concerns about the Red Roof Inn in Sutton - the exact location where over 100 asylum seeking migrants now reside.

Ryan Fattman photo.

According to the Sutton Police Department, the Red Roof Inn has been deemed by The Massachusetts Trial Court as a "high crime area." This location is documented as high risk for drug trafficking, prostitution, weapons, and dangerous criminal offenses. In the past year, two level-three sex offenders habituated and/or were arrested at the dwelling where 21 migrant children now reside. Additionally, the migrants are housed in a location that is isolated on one side of a major state highway, Route 146, that runs from Worcester to Providence. The Sutton Police Department has fielded multiple phone calls from concerned drivers who have reported migrants crossing up to six lanes of highway traffic in an attempt to reach the nearest grocery store, which is located on the other side of the highway, with no walkable access for pedestrians starting their journey from the Red Roof Inn.

The attached documents raise serious concerns about what, if any, public safety due diligence the Healey Administration conducts before determining which hotels to send families to for shelter. Are local police reports pulled and reviewed prior to sending the migrant children and families to hotels to ensure they are being placed in safe environments? Is the administration considering the accessible location of the hotels to determine if there are basic human amenities, such as access to food or personal care items, within a reasonable walkable distance since the migrants do not have personal vehicles?

Additionally, attached documentation suggests the Healey Administration has not considered the safety of the physical infrastructure where migrants are housed. On May 5, 2023 and again on June 6, 2023 your Executive Office of Public Safety and Security issued notices of non-compliance to hotel management regarding the hotel's Multi-Line Telephone System. Your notices indicate that The Red Roof Inn in Sutton has repeatedly and continuously failed to keep their emergency telephone system up to code, which your notice describes as an "important safety matter." Your administration directly states, "Your continued non-compliance and failure to respond and remedy the deficiencies of your MLTS potentially endangers your guests, employees, and the public." The notice further indicates that The Red Roof Inn has been placed on the State's published and public list which is used to "alert the public of potential safety hazards." Even after your Administration sent out the notices and determined that The Red Roof Inn's violations and non-compliance "potentially endangers...the public," the State then contracted the hotel to house the migrant families. As of September 6, 2023, the Sutton Police Department has confirmed that The Red Roof Inn has still not addressed their emergency telephone system deficiencies and is still in non-compliance with the safety regulations. Why then are the migrant families sent to reside in a hotel that your Administration has acknowledged and deemed a "public safety hazard?" How will we prevent hotels that are deemed non-compliant with public safety standards from housing migrants as your program expands?

General Well-being Concerns:

In implementing this program, the administration must provide for the well-being and quality of life for the migrants at every facility. This group of migrants arrived in Sutton at The Red Roof Inn without basic necessities, such as food or personal care items. They resided at the hotel for more than 48 hours before the Town of Sutton realized many families had not eaten since their arrival, and the Town stepped in to provide meals by opening the local school cafeteria. How

Ryan Fattman photo.

will the Administration ensure diapers and formula are provided for infants? Will women have access to feminine hygiene products? Moving forward, will three meals a day be guaranteed?

Additionally, the Administration failed to give adequate notice to local public health officials about this incoming group of migrants and local officials did not receive access to any known existing medical conditions. Because of this failure to communicate, one individual with diabetes went several days without insulin. He did not have access to his crucial medicine, and no local officials were notified to aide him.

These migrant families have been transported to the small town of Sutton, and our town leaders have not been given any information or instruction from your Administration for the next practical steps. The Administration's response since the migrants were placed in town has been concerning, and we are hoping you will be able to provide us with answers to the questions we have proposed above. Thank you for your time and your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,

Ryan Fattman
State Senator
Worcester and Hampden District

Joseph McKenna
State Representative
18th Worcester District

Cc: Lieutenant Governor Kimberley Driscoll
Secretary Edward M. Augustus, EOHLC

Ryan Fattman photo.