

INVESTING FOR A RESILIENT COMMONWEALTH

The creation of the Massachusetts state budget is an annual act of faith in our collective future—an acknowledgment that we need each other, as a Commonwealth, and that we will continue to care for each other.

While the process of creating the budget is the same from year to year, there is a growing sense, in Massachusetts and the nation as a whole, that we will face challenges in the coming years unlike any we have seen in the past. Demographic shifts in our population, technological changes that are reshaping our economy at lightning speed, social transformations that are opening the doors of opportunity to all people, and climate, weather and environmental changes all have the potential to rapidly forge a new future.

The difference between becoming overwhelmed by the scale and pace of these changes and emerging stronger from them? **Resilience.**

Resilience is most often defined as the ability to achieve a good outcome in the face of adversity. Resilience can—and must—be built on a community-by-community and statewide basis, but there is no more important place to plant the seed of resilience than within our children. Strong, resilient children will grow up to be active contributors to a productive and thriving Commonwealth.

Resilience isn't about self-reliance. It is generated through the development of strong relationships. To this end, the Massachusetts Senate is setting forth a series of priorities in our Fiscal Year 2017 budget that strengthens our focus on creating and sustaining family and community relationships. For children, young adults and families, we are boosting programs that foster mentoring and create intergenerational support systems, building powerful tools for connection, learning and future success. A healthy environment, especially during a child's early formative years, is crucial for laying the foundation of resilience. We therefore support programs and services that focus on mental health, education, healthcare, access to healthy food and quality care for our youngest children, as well as their parents.

Our children are best-served when our local cities and towns are thriving, and this budget invests heavily in our municipalities and schools. Nothing is more important to our future than providing a quality education for all of our children, so the Senate Ways and Means budget ensures that every single school district across the Commonwealth receives an increase in Chapter 70 funding. In addition, we believe that local governments are best equipped to determine growth and development for their communities, so we provide a host of tools and resources to address issues related to housing, public health and safety, transportation, arts and tourism and other amenities that help to knit a community together and keep it strong.

The ultimate goal, of course, is a strong and resilient Commonwealth. The Senate therefore reduces its reliance on one-time revenues and continues its commitment to preserve the

Rainy Day Fund, designed to buffer our state from future unknown events. This budget also continues to work towards employment and economic opportunities for all of our residents. This includes substantial investments in the state's higher education system, tools for workforce training and assistance for those striving to enter or re-enter the workforce.

In the interdependent and changing world that our children face, fostering the ability to work together to create positive change and overcome adversity will be more essential than ever. Under the guidance of Senate President Stan Rosenberg, the Senate has embraced a collaborative model of decision-making and problem-solving that has informed and strengthened the budget creation process. I would like to thank the members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, in particular my Vice Chair Sal DiDomenico of Everett and Assistant Vice Chair Pat Jehlen of Somerville, for their thoughtful contributions to, and dedicated work on, the FY 2017 budget, as well as the Senate President for his leadership.

We may not be able to predict what will happen in the coming years, but if we take conscious and creative steps to "build our youth for the future," we will be better prepared to build a future in which the Commonwealth will continue to thrive. It also means that we can face any future together, while continuing to treat each other with compassion and care.

Creating a resilient Commonwealth is important for us all. In Massachusetts, tomorrow's continued success begins with the investments we make today.



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Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means