

HOUSE No. 4881

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts



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GOVERNOR

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KARYN POLITO
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

June 15, 2022

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives,

I am filing for your consideration a bill entitled “An Act Making Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2022 to Provide for Supplementing Certain Existing Appropriations and for Certain Other Activities and Projects.”

This bill appropriates \$56 million to fully fund a class action settlement to cover veterans and the estates of veterans who lived at the Holyoke Soldiers’ Home at any time between March 1, 2020 and June 23, 2020 and who became ill or died from COVID during that period. On June 6, 2022, a Federal District Court judge approved the settlement after determining that the terms were fair and just. Under the terms approved by the court, former U.S. Attorney Donald K. Stern will serve as the settlement claims administrator and will make awards to participating eligible claimants based on his review of each claimant’s individual circumstances.

While this financial settlement cannot make up for the losses suffered at the Holyoke Soldiers’ Home in the earliest days of the pandemic, our Administration hopes that this resolution brings some measure of closure to the affected veterans and families.

I therefore urge the Legislature to enact this legislation without delay so that the Commonwealth can discharge its obligations and the class member veterans and family members can receive compensation as provided under the terms of the settlement agreement.

Respectfully submitted

Charles D. Baker,
Governor

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court
(2021-2022)**

An Act making appropriations for fiscal year 2022 to provide for supplementing certain existing appropriations and for certain other activities and projects.

Whereas, The deferred operation of this act would tend to defeat its purposes, which are forthwith to make supplemental appropriations for fiscal year 2022 and to make certain changes in law, each of which is immediately necessary to carry out those appropriations or to accomplish other important public purposes, therefore it is hereby declared to be an emergency law, necessary for the immediate preservation of the public convenience.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. To provide for certain unanticipated obligations of the commonwealth, to
2 provide for an alteration of purpose for current appropriations and to meet certain requirements
3 of law, the sum set forth in section 2A is hereby appropriated from the General Fund unless
4 specifically designated otherwise in this act, for the several purposes and subject to the
5 conditions specified in this act and subject to the laws regulating the disbursement of public
6 funds for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022. This sum shall be made available until June 30,
7 2023.

8 SECTION 2A.

9 EXECUTIVE OFFICE FOR ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE

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Reserves

11 1599-4195 For a reserve to fund amounts approved to be paid by the United States
12 District Court for the District of Massachusetts in Estate of Joseph Sniadach, et al. v. Walsh et
13 al., 20-CV-30115, and for related costs in administering the court approved
14 settlement..... \$56,000,000