

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

JOURNAL OF THE HOUSE.



THURSDAY, JANUARY 16, 2025.

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JOURNAL OF THE HOUSE.

Thursday, January 16, 2025.

Met according to adjournment at eleven o'clock A.M., in an Informal Session, with Mr. Garballey of Arlington in the Chair (having been appointed by the Speaker, under authority conferred by Rule 5, to perform the duties of the Chair).

At the request of the Chair (Mr. Garballey), the members, guests and employees joined with him in reciting the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Pledge of allegiance.

Appointment of the Speaker.

The Speaker announced that (under the provisions of Section 149 of Chapter 135 of the Acts of 2024) he had appointed Scott Scharffenberg of ROCA to the special commission to study the Commonwealth's funding structure for violence prevention services as the appointee who shall be from an organization that has received a grant through the Safe and Successful Youth Initiative.

Violence Prevention Services commission.

Communications.

Communications

From the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (see Section 94(p) of Chapter 71 of the General Laws) submitting the Commonwealth Virtual Schools legislative report for fiscal year 2022; and

Virtual schools.

From the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (see Section 4(b) of Chapter 258F of the General Laws) submitting the Certification for Victims of Violent Crime and Human Trafficking report for calendar year 2023;

Violent crime and human trafficking.

Severally were placed on file.

Reports.

Annual Reports

Of the Massachusetts Development Finance Agency (MassDevelopment) and the Massachusetts Cultural Council (under Section 42 of Chapter 23G of the General Laws) submitting its fiscal year 2024 report of the Cultural Facilities Fund;

Cultural Facilities Fund.

Of the Massachusetts Development Finance Agency (MassDevelopment) (under Section 46(m) of Chapter 23G of the General Laws) submitting its fiscal year 2024 report of the Transformative Development Fund entitled: Collaborative Workspace Program [copies of the report were forwarded to the committee on Ways and Means, the committee on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies and the committee on Labor and Workforce Development, as required by said law]; and

Collaborative Workspace Program.

Of the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust (under Section 17 of Chapter 29C of the General Laws) for fiscal year ended June 30, 2024 [copies of the report forwarded to the Speaker, the Senate President, the Senate committee on Ways and Means and the House committee on Ways and Means, as required by said law];

Clean Water Trust.

Severally were placed on file.

Recess.

At eleven o'clock A.M., on motion of Mr. Frost of Auburn (Mr. Garballey of Arlington being in the Chair), the House recessed until ten minutes before six o'clock P.M.; and at six o'clock P.M. the House was called to order with the Speaker in the Chair.

Recess.

The Speaker having taken the Chair,— Pursuant to assignment, at ten minutes past six o'clock P.M., the two branches met in

JOINT SESSION

At thirteen minutes past six o'clock P.M., the two branches met in

Joint Session.

CONVENTION

In the Chamber of the House of Representatives, for the purpose of receiving such communication as Her Excellency Maura T. Healy, Governor of the Commonwealth, may be pleased to make relative to the concerns of the Commonwealth; and were called to order by the Honorable Karen E. Spilka, President of the Senate.

Order Adopted.

On motion of Mr. Rush,—

Ordered, That a committee be appointed to consist of members of the Senate and House of Representatives to wait upon Her Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, the Constitutional officers, members of the Executive Council and other distinguished guests of the Governor and inform them that the two branches are now in Convention and request the honor of their presence.

Notification of
Constitutional
officers, et al.

Senators Brownsberger, Friedman, Collins, Oliveira and Tarr were appointed on the part of the Senate; and Representatives Gregoire of Marlborough, Cruz of Salem, Barber of Somerville, Domb of Amherst, Scanlon of North Attleborough, LaNatra of Kingston, John Francis Moran of Boston, Chan of Quincy, Smola of Warren, Frost of Auburn and Kane of Shrewsbury were appointed on the part of the House.

Subsequently, Ms. Friedman, for the committee, reported that the Constitutional officers, the Executive Council and distinguished guests would immediately attend upon the convention.

Shortly thereafter, Her Honor the Lieutenant-Governor, Kim Driscoll, the Constitutional officers, members of the Executive Council and cabinet members entered the Chamber under the escort of the Sergeant-at-Arms.

Invocation.

The President in the Chair, then introduced Father John J. Unni, Pastor of Saint Cecilia Church in Boston, who delivered the following Invocation:

Good evening everyone. I am Reverend John Unni, Pastor of Saint Cecilia's Parish in Boston and Chaplain for the Boston Fire Department. Thank you Governor Healey for this honor. So—two collections and this will go about an hour and a half...

As we gather for the State of the Commonwealth tonight, each year brings us many new and similar realities: issues of war and peace, equity and inequity, challenges and opportunities, hopelessness and hope.

So tonight let us be a people of hope even though there can be so much to bring us down individually and collectively. But let's also be realists in our abilities to exercise our role, our freedom and our responsibilities, to continue to make this Commonwealth a good and even better place to be, live and to work.

With all the strife that is rising in the world, in our own country, with terror, with vengeance and retaliation, with all that can dampen and squash our spirits, we must be a people of hope. And we do this best by being individuals, people of decency, honesty, integrity and authenticity. I don't pitch a perfect game, but it is something for which we are all striving.

We need not only to speak of love and compassion but to somehow exercise and promote it and to live it as best we can. We do this by taking care of each other, whatever that means. People who are new to this country and those who have been here forever. By taking care of the environment as our climate changes. I thought tonight, especially as the Chaplain on the Boston Fire, tonight, we especially hold in our hearts, our sisters and brothers in California who have been totally devastated by these wildfires. We pray for those who are fighting the fires, the ones coordinating the efforts those who are responding first as police, EMS and so many other public servants. May we never take for granted how important it is that we take care of one another, especially in the most devastating and vulnerable of times. West Coast – East Coast – in the middle, all of us I think we do this best by not judging but helping, by sharing and empowering, not sniping and fearing.

The challenges of our Commonwealth, our country and our world require good, honest, smart, committed leaders to creatively and effectively tackle big problems and big opportunities. We need leaders who are creative, dignified and effective ways. Always recognize the dignity of every human being, person first, and then, figure out how to remedy their situations.

So tonight, calling on the God of understanding from our many different beautiful, diverse, faith backgrounds, as we pray:

Lord God, it is from you that each of us has life, purpose and mission in this world. We are not the center of the universe, but each of us has been created by you to do good, and to do it well, as best we can in the time we have been given. So we ask you to bless this evening's gathering. Bless and inspire our Governor, Maura Healey, Lieutenant Governor, Kim Driscoll, the legislators, all the elected officials, the cabinet and all in Leadership in this Commonwealth.

Continue to guide the Governor and all of our elected officials with your spirit, which is a spirit of wisdom, knowledge, understanding, heart smarts, with a spirit of gentle strength, compassion and understanding, as we take care of each other, as we step up to our responsibilities, exercise our duties and keep the dignity of every human being in mind as we go forward with these solutions to complex issues, many with simultaneously competing realities at play.

Lastly, as we do this Lord, may we not be afraid, may we not be fear based or vengeful, but may we work together with a spirit of cooperation, always assuming

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positive intent being realistic and generous as we face each day in the commonwealth, showing mercy, acting justly and walking humbly with our God.

Amen.

Order Adopted.

The President in the Chair,—

On motion of Mr. Cyr,—

Ordered, That a committee be appointed to consist of members of the Senate and the House of Representatives to wait upon Her Excellency the Governor and inform him that the two branches are now in Convention for the purpose of receiving such communication as she may be pleased to make to them, relating to the concerns of the Commonwealth.

Notification
of the Governor.

Senators Creem, Driscoll, Lovely, Rausch and Dooner were appointed to the committee on the part of the Senate; Representatives Hogan of Stow, Garballey of Arlington, Fiola of Fall River, O'Day of West Boylston, Hamilton of Methuen, Donaghue of Westborough, Arriaga of Chicopee, Fluker-Reid of Boston, Ferguson of Holden, Muradian of Grafton and Wong of Saugus, were appointed to the committee on the part of the House.

Subsequently, Ms. Creem and Ms. Hogan, for the said committee, reported that Her Excellency the Governor, Maura T. Healy, would immediately attend upon the convention.

Presentation of Colors.

The President introduced soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 181st Infantry Regiment, Massachusetts Army National Guard , who posted the colors.

Presentation
of colors.

Pledge of Allegiance.

The President then introduced the Officer Christopher D'Angelo of the Weymouth Police Department and Lieutenant Bryan Smith of the Whitman Fire Department who led the Convention in the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Pledge of
allegiance.

National Anthem.

The President then introduced Phaedra Butler, who sang the National Anthem.

National Anthem.

Shortly thereafter, Her Excellency the Governor, Maura T. Healy entered the Chamber under the escort of the Sergeant-at-Arms.

The President then introduced Her Excellency the Governor, Maura T. Healy, who thereupon addressed the Convention relative to the concerns of the Commonwealth (Senate, No. 1).

State of the
Commonwealth
address.

Benediction.

The benediction was given by Rabbi Marc Baker, President and CEO of Combined Jewish Philanthropies, as follows:

Benediction.

Thank you, Governor Healey, for your inspiring words and for your leadership.

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It's such an honor for me to be with you tonight. I'm a 4th-generation Bostonian, so this means a lot to me and my family.

Please join me in praying for the well-being of the Governor and Lt. Governor, for the elected officials here today, and for all the elected officials and civil servants across the Commonwealth and our country.

May God, source of justice, truth, and love, before Whom every human leader stands — bless these leaders with the wisdom, discernment, and good judgment to make impossible decisions guided by vision, values, and love for the people they serve.

We are living in fragile times. The problems we face — locally and globally, including natural disasters and war — have no simple solutions, yet require focused, patient, relentless commitment to making the world a better place. In that spirit, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the dramatic progress made yesterday toward returning the hostages and achieving a ceasefire in Gaza. God, may every one of them return home to their families, and may everyone be able to live with dignity, security, and peace.

Times like these can disincentivize well-meaning people from taking on positions of leadership and dedicating their lives to public service. Which is precisely why the work of this chamber is so sacred and so desperately needed right now.

May God bless these leaders with curiosity and open-mindedness, so they may pursue truth and a deeper understanding of our complex world; bless them with patience and compassion for all of us, the citizens for whom they are responsible and whose lives are in their hands. May they find meaning, purpose, and joy in their service, for which we are deeply grateful.

God, let us also remember that the sacred work of building and rebuilding our society is a collective responsibility. This great country was founded on the ideal of a covenantal partnership between we the people and the leaders we have elected to lead us.

When our challenges feel overwhelming, we can be tempted to paralysis or despair. This week, Jews around the world will begin reading the Book of Exodus, which describes the journey from slavery to freedom, from bitterness to joy, from darkness to light. The Exodus story gave us a revolutionary idea: HOPE. Hope is the belief that we are never doomed by the past nor stuck in the present, that the world can be better tomorrow than it is today, and that, like Moses at the burning bush, every one of us has a role and responsibility in making that happen. We have the agency, the power, the God-given creative capacity to change our lives and our world for the better.

And how do we do this? We begin with what in Hebrew is called a cheshbon hanefesh — a reckoning of the soul — an honest look in the mirror and into our own hearts. For it is here, inside each of us, where the work of repairing the world begins. One choice at a time, one relationship at a time, each of us asking ourselves: What can I do today?

May God — source of justice, truth, and love, before Whom every one of us stands — bless each of us, the citizens of this Commonwealth and this great nation, that we may be the people our leaders deserve; grant us the patience and resilience to keep building a better future; give us the moral and spiritual fortitude to fight for the values we hold dear and against those who seek to cause us harm, while protecting every person's dignity and humanity.

God, let us recommit ourselves to all that unites us, let us reweave the ties that bind us; together, let us write the creative, joyful, life-affirming story of our collective future.

And let us say: Amen.
Thank you.

The President in the Chair, Her Excellency the Governor, Maura T. Healy, the Lieutenant-Governor, the Constitutional officers, the members of the Executive Council, members of the Supreme Judicial Court and the Adjutant General then withdrew from the Chamber under the escort of the Sergeant-at-Arms.

Withdrawal
from Chamber.

On motion of Mr. Cyr, at seven minutes past eight o'clock P.M., the Convention of the Two Branches was dissolved; and the Senate withdrew from the Joint Session, under the escort of the Sergeant-at-Arms.

Order.

On motion of Mr. Mariano of Quincy,—
Ordered, That when the House adjourns today, it adjourn to meet on Tuesday next at eleven o'clock A.M.

Next
sitting.

At nine minutes after eight o'clock P.M., on motion of Ms. Ferguson of Holden (Mr. Garballey of Arlington being in the Chair), the House adjourned, to meet the following Tuesday at eleven o'clock A.M., in an Informal Session.