

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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**JOURNAL OF THE SENATE.**



**THURSDAY, MAY 28, 2026**

[48]

JOURNAL OF THE SENATE

Thursday, May 28, 2026.

Met at eight minutes past eleven o'clock A.M. (Mr. Brownsberger in the Chair) (having been appointed by the President, under authority conferred by Senate Rule 4, to perform the duties of the Chair).

The Chair (Mr. Brownsberger), members, guests and staff then recited the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Pledge of allegiance.

Reports.

The following reports were severally received and placed on file, to wit:

Report of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (pursuant to line item 1595-6368 of Section 2 of Chapter 140 of the Acts of 2024) submitting its Transit Connectivity FY25 report (copies having been forwarded to the Chair of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means and the Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Transportation) (received May 26, 2026);

MassDOT,-- Transit Connectivity FY25 report. SD3929

Report of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (pursuant to line item 1596-2406 of Section 2 of Chapter 140 of the Acts of 2024) submitting its RTA Fare Free Pilot Program FY25 report (copies having been forwarded to the Chair of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means and the Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Transportation) (received May 26, 2026);

MassDOT,-- RTA performance management report. SD3930

Report of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (pursuant to Section 230 of Chapter 140 of the Acts of 2024 and Section 6 of Chapter 6C of the General Laws) submitting its Regional Transit Authority Performance Management FY25 annual report (copies having been forwarded to the Chair of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means and the Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Transportation ) (received May 26, 2026);

MassDOT,-- RTA performance management report. SD3932

Report of MassHealth (pursuant to Section 80 of Chapter 118E of the General Laws) submitting its Mental Health Parity FY25 report (copies having been forwarded to the Senate Chairs of the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing and the Joint Committee on Mental Health, Substance Use and Recovery) (received May 27, 2026); and

MassHealth,-- Mental Health Parity FY25 report. SD3935

Report of the Department of Revenue (pursuant to Section 5 of Chapter 62F of the General Laws) submitting its April 2026 monthly report on year-to-date net state tax revenue for the current fiscal year (copies having been forwarded to the Chair of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means and the Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Revenue) (received May 28, 2026).

DOR,-- Net Tax Revenue April FY26 report. SD3937

Petitions.

Petitions were severally presented and referred as follows:

By Mr. Cyr and Mr. Flanagan of Dennis, a joint petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 3097) of Julian Cyr and Christopher Richard Flanagan (by vote of the town) for legislation to amend the waterways capital improvement fund for the town of Dennis [Local approval received]; and

Dennis,-- waterways capital improvement.

By Mr. Cyr and Mr. Flanagan of Dennis, a joint petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 3098) of Julian Cyr and Christopher Richard Flanagan (by vote of the town) for

Dennis,-- digital legal notices.

legislation to authorize the town of Dennis to publish legal notices digitally [Local approval received];

**Severally, under Senate Rule 20, to the committee on Municipalities and Regional Government.**

**Severally sent to the House for concurrence.**

By Ms. Comerford, a petition (accompanied by bill) (subject to Joint Rule 12) of Joanne M. Comerford for legislation to authorize the South Deerfield Fire District to continue the employment of fire department member Steven Kolakoski; and

Steven Kolakoski,--  
South Deerfield Fire  
District.  
SD3936  
Customer service,--  
food delivery.  
SD3939

By Mr. Rush, a petition (accompanied by bill) (subject to Joint Rule 12) of Michael F. Rush for legislation relative to refunds and customer service standards for food delivery platforms;

**Severally, under Senate Rule 20, to the committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently.**

*Reports of Committees.*

By Mr. Cronin, for the committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security, on petition, a Bill creating a special commission to examine school bus safety (Senate, No. 2861);

School bus safety,--  
commission.

**Referred, under Joint Rule 29, to the committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently.**

By Ms. Edwards, for the committee on the Judiciary, on petition, a Bill relative to probation violations (Senate, No. 1134);

Probation  
violations.

By the same Senator, for the same committee, on petition, a Bill to protect survivors of spousal abuse from alimony liability (Senate, No. 1236);

Spousal abuse,--  
survivors.

By Mr. Cronin, for the committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security, on petition, a Bill addressing staged suicides (Senate, No. 2743);

Staged suicides,--  
officer training.

By the same Senator, for the same committee, on petition, a Bill updating Massachusetts student transportation (Senate, No. 3021);

Students,--  
transportation  
safety.  
Nuclear power  
plants,-- safety.

By the same Senator, for the same committee, on petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 2680), a Bill to improve public health and safety standards in communities around aging nuclear power plants and high-level nuclear waste dump sites (Senate, No. 3074);

Colby's Law

By the same Senator, for the same committee, on petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 2681), a Bill establishing safety standards for motorcross tracks (Senate, No. 3075); and

By Mr. Collins, for the committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight, on petition, a Bill relative to a certain property in the city of Lowell (Senate, No. 3061);

Lowell,-- land.

**Severally read and, under Senate Rule 27, referred to the committee on Ways and Means.**

By Mr. Collins, for the committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight, on petition, a Bill designating asparagus as the official vegetable of the Commonwealth (Senate, No. 3073);

Official vegetable,--  
asparagus.

**Read and, under Senate Rule 26, referred to the committee on Rules.**

PAPERS FROM THE HOUSE.

Petitions were severally referred, in concurrence, as follows, to wit:

Petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 5456) of Hadley Luddy (by vote of the town) relative to the year-round market rate rental housing trust fund in the town of Provincetown;

Provincetown,--  
rental housing trust  
fund.

**To the committee on Municipalities and Regional Government.**

**UNCORRECTED PROOF.**

Petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 5457) of Hadley Luddy (by vote of the town) that the town of Provincetown be authorized to impose a 0.5% real estate transfer fee upon the transfer of certain property in said town;

Provincetown,-- real estate transfer fee.

**To the committee on Revenue.**

A Bill relative to the maximum age requirement for original appointment as a police officer for the city of Worcester (House, No. 3929,-- on petition) [Local approval received],-- **was read and, under Senate Rule 26, placed in the Orders of the Day for the next session.**

Worcester,-- police officers.

*Matters Taken Out of the Orders of the Day.*

There being no objection, the following matters were taken out of the Orders of the Day and considered as follows:

The Senate Bill providing killed in the line of duty benefits to Joanne Songy, surviving spouse of Detective John D. Songy, a police officer of the town of Rutland (Senate, No. 1831),-- was read a third time.

Rutland,-- Songy benefits.

Pending the question on passing the bill to be engrossed, Mr. Durant moved that the bill be amended in section 1, by striking out, in line 4, the figure "100" and inserting in place thereof the following figure:- "9".

**The amendment was adopted.**

**The bill (Senate, No. 1831, amended) was then passed to be engrossed. Sent to the House for concurrence.**

The House Bill exempting Nick Santos from the maximum age requirement for the position of police officer in the city of Haverhill (House, No. 4390) (its title having been changed by the committee on Bills in the Third Reading),-- **was read a third time and passed to be engrossed, in concurrence.**

Haverhill,-- Nick Santos.

The House Bill exempting Anthony Morales from the maximum age requirement for the position of police officer in the city of Haverhill (House, No. 4442) (its title having been changed by the committee on Bills in the Third Reading),-- **was read a third time and passed to be engrossed, in concurrence.**

Haverhill,-- Anthony Morales.

*Resolutions.*

The following resolutions (having been filed with the Clerk) were considered forthwith and adopted, as follows:-

Resolutions (filed by Ms. Comerford) "congratulating the Florence Community Band on the occasion of its twenty-fifth anniversary."

Florence Community Band.

PAPERS FROM THE HOUSE

*Engrossed Bills.*

The following engrossed bills (both of which originated in the House), having been certified by the Senate Clerk to be rightly and truly prepared for final passage, were severally passed to be enacted and were signed by the Acting President (Mr. Brownsberger) and laid before the Governor for her approbation, to wit:

Authorizing the town of Stoneham to waive the maximum age requirement for original appointment of police officers in the town (see House, No. 2800); and

Bills laid before the Governor.

Relative to the maximum age requirement for police officers in the city of Newton (see House, No. 4718).

A petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 5465) of Carole A. Fiola for legislation to authorize municipalities to opt-in to a temporary pilot to extend the hours of liquor licenses and to allow for public consumption in designated districts from June 1 to August 31, 2026,-- **was referred, in concurrence, under suspension of Joint Rule 12, to the committee on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies.**

Liquor licenses,--  
extended hours.

*Resolutions.*

The following resolutions (having been filed with the Clerk) were considered forthwith and adopted, as follows:-

Resolutions (filed by Messrs. DiDomenico and Cyr, Ms. Kennedy and Messrs. Mark, Collins and Tarr) “congratulating the Italian Consulate in Boston on its celebration of June 2, 2026, as Italian National Day on the occasion of the eightieth anniversary of the establishment of the Republic of Italy.”

Italian Consulate in  
Boston.

*Recess.*

There being no objection, at thirteen minutes eleven o’clock A.M., the Chair (Mr. Brownsberger) declared a recess subject to the call of the Chair; and, at four minutes past two o’clock P.M., the Senate reassembled, Mr. Brownsberger in the Chair.

Recess.

PAPER FROM THE HOUSE.

The House Bill making appropriations for the fiscal year 2027 for the maintenance of the departments, boards, commissions, institutions, and certain activities of the commonwealth, for interest, sinking fund, and serial bond requirements, and for certain permanent improvements (House, No. 5501),-- came from the House with the endorsement that the House had NON-concurred in the Senate amendment striking out all after the enacting clause and inserting in place thereof the text contained in Senate document numbered 3100, and had asked for a committee of conference on the disagreeing votes of the two branches; and that Representatives Michlewitz of Boston, Diggs of Barnstable and Smola of Warren had been appointed the committee on the part of the House.

FY27 General  
Appropriations.

**The rules were suspended on motion of Ms. Edwards and the matter was considered forthwith.**

**On motion of the same Senator, the Senate insisted on its amendment and concurred in the appointment of a committee of conference; and Senators Rodrigues, Comerford and O’Connor were appointed on the part of the Senate.**

**The bill was returned to the House endorsed accordingly.**

*Resolutions.*

The following resolutions (having been filed with the Clerk) were considered forthwith and adopted, as follows:-

Resolutions (filed by Mr. Feeney, Ms. Friedman and Mr. Eldridge)

RESOLUTIONS RESPONDING TO THE SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT’S ORDER OF MAY 7, 2026, AND ENHANCING GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY.

WHEREAS, AS ELECTED MEMBERS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL COURT, SENATORS BEAR A RESPONSIBILITY TO UPHOLD THE CONSTITUTION AND PRESERVE THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE GENERAL COURT AS A COEQUAL BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT; AND

SJC,-- government  
transparency.

**UNCORRECTED PROOF.**

WHEREAS, THE SENATE RECOGNIZES THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THE INTEGRITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF STATE GOVERNMENT; AND

WHEREAS, THE SENATE IS COMMITTED TO INFORMING THE PUBLIC AND CONSTITUENTS OF THE WORK IT DOES ON THE PEOPLE'S BEHALF; AND

WHEREAS, SINCE MARCH 2023 AND CONTINUING THROUGH JANUARY 3, 2025, WHEN CHAPTER 250 OF THE ACTS OF 2024 CAME INTO EFFECT AFTER THE VOTERS' APPROVAL OF QUESTION 1, THE OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR ISSUED LETTERS, STATEMENTS AND COMMUNICATIONS EXPRESSING ITS INTENTION TO CONDUCT A "PERFORMANCE AUDIT" OF THE GENERAL COURT; AND

WHEREAS, ON JANUARY 6, 2025, THE OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR SENT THE SENATE REQUESTS FOR DOCUMENTS RELATED TO ITS PROPOSED PERFORMANCE AUDIT; AND

WHEREAS, MEMBERS OF THE SENATE HAVE SOUGHT CLARIFYING INFORMATION FROM THE OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR CONCERNING THE PROPOSED PERFORMANCE AUDIT AND DOCUMENT REQUESTS AND HAVE CONVEYED THE SENATE'S CONCERNS REGARDING THE AUDIT'S CONSTITUTIONALITY, SCOPE, ADHERENCE TO GENERALLY ACCEPTED GOVERNMENT AUDITING STANDARDS AND THE AUDITOR'S APPARENT CONFLICT OF INTEREST; AND

WHEREAS, ON FEBRUARY 10, 2026, THE STATE AUDITOR BROUGHT SUIT WITHOUT THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S AUTHORIZATION AGAINST THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE, THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND THE CLERKS OF BOTH LEGISLATIVE BODIES; AND

WHEREAS, AT ORAL ARGUMENT BEFORE THE SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT ON MAY 6, 2026, COUNSEL FOR THE STATE AUDITOR AGREED THAT THE AUDITOR'S LITIGATION RELATED ONLY TO THE LEGISLATURE'S ALLEGED FAILURE TO PRODUCE DOCUMENTS RESPONSIVE TO THE 4 SPECIFIC REQUESTS IN THE OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR'S LETTER OF JANUARY 6, 2025; AND

WHEREAS, ON MAY 7, 2026, THE SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT ISSUED AN ORDER CONCLUDING THE AUDITOR'S LITIGATION IS "NOW LIMITED" TO THE 4 REQUESTS MADE ON JANUARY 6, 2025; AND

WHEREAS, THE SENATE, INFORMED BY THE RECENT CLARIFICATION OF SCOPE, SEEKS TO RESPOND RESPONSIBLY AND TRANSPARENTLY; NOW THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED, THAT THE SENATE IS GRATEFUL THAT THE MAY 7, 2026, ORDER BY THE SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT BROUGHT CLARITY TO THE STATE AUDITOR'S REQUESTS RELATED TO THE PROPOSED PERFORMANCE AUDIT; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, THAT THE SENATE, SEEKING IN GOOD FAITH TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL TRANSPARENCY, WILL PROVIDE PROMPTLY TO THE OFFICE OF THE STATE AUDITOR ALL RECORDS RESPONSIVE TO ITS LETTER OF JANUARY 6, 2025, AS CLARIFIED BY THE SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT'S ORDER OF MAY 7, 2026, WHICH SPECIFIES (A) "[T]HE OFFICIAL BUDGETS FOR THE SENATE FOR FISCAL YEARS 2021, 2022, 2023 AND 2024", (B) "[C]OPIES OF OFFICIAL AUDITS OF THE SENATE FOR FISCAL YEARS 2021, 2022, 2023 AND 2024", (C) "[A] LISTING OF ALL TRANSACTIONS RELATED TO THE SENATE'S BALANCE FORWARD LINE ITEM FOR FISCAL YEARS 2021, 2022, 2023 AND 2024" AND (D) "[A] LISTING OF ALL MONETARY SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS ENTERED INTO BY THE

**UNCORRECTED PROOF.**

SENATE WITH ANY CURRENT OR FORMER EMPLOYEES OR MEMBERS OF THE SENATE DURING FISCAL YEARS 2021, 2022, 2023 AND 2024”; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, THAT THE SENATE, IN PROVIDING SAID RECORDS, DOES SO VOLUNTARILY BUT DOES NOT CONCEDE THAT IT MAY BE AUDITED PURSUANT TO SECTION 12 OF CHAPTER 11 OF THE GENERAL LAWS WITHOUT VIOLATING THE CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMONWEALTH; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, THAT THE SENATE RESERVES ALL ITS RIGHTS TO OBJECT TO ANY SUCH AUDIT, PRESENT OR FUTURE, AND ON ANY GROUNDS, INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, THAT CHAPTER 250 OF THE ACTS OF 2024 VIOLATES THE SENATE’S CONSTITUTIONAL RULEMAKING AUTHORITY, SEPARATION OF POWERS, LEGISLATIVE IMMUNITY AND PRIVILEGE AND THE LEGAL PRESUMPTION THAT STATUTES OPERATE PROSPECTIVELY AND CANNOT BE APPLIED RETROACTIVELY IN THE ABSENCE OF CLEAR LEGISLATIVE INTENT; AND BE IT FURTHER

RESOLVED, THAT A COPY OF THESE RESOLUTIONS BE TRANSMITTED FORTHWITH BY THE CLERK OF THE SENATE TO THE JUSTICES OF THE SUPREME JUDICIAL COURT, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL AND THE STATE AUDITOR.

After debate, the question on adoption of the resolutions was determined by a call of the yeas and nays at nine minutes past three o’clock P.M., on motion of Mr. Feeney, as follows, to wit (yeas 33 – nays 6) [**Yeas and Nays No. 186**]:

**YEAS.**

Barrett, Michael J.	Gómez, Adam
Brady, Michael D.	Howard, Vanna
Brownsberger, William N.	Jehlen, Patricia D.
Collins, Nick	Keenan, John F.
Comerford, Joanne M.	Kennedy, Robyn K.
Creem, Cynthia Stone	Lewis, Jason M.
Crighton, Brendan P.	Lovely, Joan B.
Cronin, John J.	Mark, Paul W.
Cyr, Julian	Miranda, Liz
DiDomenico, Sal N.	Moore, Michael O.
Driscoll, Jr., William J.	Oliveira, Jacob R.
Edwards, Lydia	Payano, Pavel
Eldridge, James B.	Rodrigues, Michael J.
Feeney, Paul R.	Rush, Michael F.
Fernandes, Dylan A.	Spilka, Karen E.
Finegold, Barry R.	Velis, John C. – <b>33</b> .
Friedman, Cindy F.	

**NAYS.**

Dooner, Kelly A.	Montigny, Mark C.
Durant, Peter J.	O’Connor, Patrick M.
Fattman, Ryan C.	Tarr, Bruce E. – <b>6</b> .

**ABSENT OR NOT VOTING.**

Rausch, Rebecca L. – **1**.

The yeas and nays having been completed at nineteen minutes past three o’clock P.M., the resolutions were adopted.

*Moment of Silence.*

At the request of the Chair (Ms. Lovely), the members, guests and staff stood in a moment of silence and reflection to the memory of William Howard.

Moment of silence.

*Order Adopted.*

On motion of Mr. Tarr,--

*Ordered*, that when the Senate adjourns today, it adjourn to meet again on Monday next at eleven o'clock A.M., and that the Clerk be directed to dispense with the printing of a calendar.

Time of meeting.

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*Adjournment in Memory of William Howard.*

The Senator from Second Essex, Ms. Lovely, moved that when the Senate adjourns today, it does so in memory of William Howard.

William F. "Bill" Howard of Beverly, Massachusetts, died peacefully on December 13th, 2025, surrounded by his loving family. Born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania on November 22, 1945, he was the son of William L. Howard and Anne (Daily) Howard. He was the beloved husband of Joyce Howard, with whom he shared 54 years of marriage.

Bill graduated from Beverly High School and Merrimack College. He went on to become a Certified Public Accountant and held positions including Partner and Senior Vice President, retiring as President of Beverly Cooperative Bank. He loved being a part of and helping the community he lived in.

Bill served on the Boards at Endicott College, Cabot Cinema, and the Beverly YMCA. He served as Chair of the United Way of the North Shore, contributor to the Peabody Essex Museum, Essex National Heritage Commission, and Montserrat College of Arts. Bill was awarded the American Red Cross Enduring Hero award for his public service to his community.

Bill was very active and loved golf, pickleball, skiing with family, running, hiking, snow shoeing and vacationing in St. John and Virgin Gorda.

In addition to his wife, he is survived by two sons, Glenn W. Howard and his wife Christine, and Gregg D. Howard and his wife Jennifer; four grandchildren, Avery, Charlotte, Cole and Brynn; his brother, Richard, his sister, Cathy, as well as a loving extended family including Teri and Joel Brady, Carla and Mike Abate, and Keith and Vicki Fumarola.

Accordingly, as a mark of respect to the memory of William Howard, at twenty-three minutes past three o'clock P.M., on motion of Mr. Tarr, the Senate adjourned to meet again on Monday next at eleven o'clock A.M.

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