

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

JOURNAL OF THE SENATE.



THURSDAY, APRIL 17, 2025.

[35]

JOURNAL OF THE SENATE.

Thursday, April 17, 2025.

Met at four minutes past eleven o'clock A.M. (Ms. Edwards in the Chair).

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

Pledge of
allegiance.

Communication.

Communication from the Honorable Karen E. Spilka, President of the Senate, announcing the re-appointment of Senator Barry Finegold (pursuant to Section 68 of Chapter 23K of the General Laws) to the Gaming Policy Advisory Committee (received April 15, 2025),-- **was placed on file.**

Gaming Policy
Advisory
Committee,--
appointment.

Reports.

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

Report of the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (pursuant to Section 39 of Chapter 7C of the General Laws) submitting its 2024 report on the Real Property Owned and Leased by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (a copy having been forwarded to the Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight) (received April 15, 2025);

DCAMM,-- Real
Property 2024
report.
SD2822

Report of the Executive Office of the Trial Court (pursuant to Section 15(c) of Chapter 239 of the General Laws) submitting its report summary statistics on eviction filings, actions, and dispositions from January 2024 through March 2025 (copies having been forwarded to the Chair of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, the Senate Chairs of the Joint Committee on Housing and the Joint Committee on the Judiciary) (received April 15, 2025);

EOTC,-- rental
protections Mar
2025 report.
SD2823

Report of the Office of the Comptroller (pursuant to Section 35T of Chapter 10 of the General Laws) submitting its April 2025 Certification of MBTA Dedicated Sales Tax Revenues for the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2025 (a copy having been forwarded to the Chair of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means) (received April 16, 2025);

Comptroller,--
MBTA
Certification Sales
Tax report.
SD2825

Report of the Office of the Comptroller (pursuant to Section 6B(b) of Chapter 29 of the General Laws) submitting its Third Quarter Federal Grants 2025 report (a copy having been forwarded to the Chair of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means) (received April 16, 2025);

Comptroller,-- Q3
FY25 Federal
Grants report.
SD2827

Report of the Department of Economic Research (pursuant to Section 14F of Chapter 151A of the General Laws) submitting its April 2025 Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund Quarterly Outlook (copies having been forwarded to the Chair of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means and the Senate Chair of the Joint Committee on Labor and Workforce Development) (received April 16, 2025); and

DER,-- UI trust
fund quarterly
report.
SD2828

Report of the Peace Officer Standards and Training Commission (pursuant to Section 16 of Chapter 6E of the General Laws) submitting its 2024 annual report (received April 16, 2025).

POST
Commission,--
annual report.
SD2829

UNCORRECTED PROOF.

Petitions.

Petitions were severally presented and referred as follows:

By Mr. Brady, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 2510) of Michael D. Brady relative to the election of the mayor, city councilor and school committee in the city of Brockton;

Brockton elections.

**Under Senate Rule 20, to the committee on Election Laws.
Sent to the House for concurrence.**

By Mr. Fernandes, a petition (accompanied by bill) (subject to Joint Rule 12) of Dylan A. Fernandes for legislation to require equitable funding for non-regional school districts with high transportation costs; and

Routes relief fund.
SD2824

By the same Senator, a petition (accompanied by bill) (subject to Joint Rule 12) of Dylan A. Fernandes for legislation to eliminate predatory transportation pricing of school districts;

School,--
transportation
pricing.
SD2830

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

Committees Discharged.

Mr. Payano, for the committee on Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure, reported, asking to be discharged from further consideration

Of the petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 218) of Sal N. DiDomenico, Joanne M. Comerford, Manny Cruz, Paul R. Feeney and other members of the General Court for legislation relative to Social Work Uplifting Practices and Exam Removal ("The SUPER Act"),-- and recommending that the same be referred to the committee on Higher Education.

SUPER Act.

Of the petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 227) of Ryan C. Fattman and Bruce E. Tarr for legislation to expand options for EMT paramedics; and

EMT paramedics.

Of the petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 247) of John F. Keenan for legislation to increase the number of continuing education hours of podiatrists;

Podiatrists,--
continuing
education.

And recommending that the same severally be referred to the committee on Public Health.

Ms. Rausch, for the committee on Environment and Natural Resources, reported, asking to be discharged from further consideration of the petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 561) of Brendan P. Crighton for legislation to streamline permitting for rail electrification,-- and recommending that the same be referred to the committee on Transportation.

Rail
electrification,--
permitting.

Severally, under Senate Rule 36, the reports were considered forthwith and accepted.

Severally sent to the House for concurrence.

PAPERS FROM THE HOUSE.

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

Petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3911) of James C. Arena-DeRosa and Marcus S. Vaughn (by vote of the town) relative to the charter of the town of Millis;

Millis,-- charter.

To the committee on Municipalities and Regional Government.

Petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3915) of Jessica Ann Giannino (with the approval of the mayor and city council) relative to retirement benefits for Leo MacAskill, a retired police officer of the police department of the city of Revere;

Revere,-- Leo
MacAskill.

UNCORRECTED PROOF.

Petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 3916) of Kelly W. Pease (with the approval of the mayor and city council) that the city of Westfield be authorized to establish an age limit for original appointment to the position of police officer in said city; and

Westfield,-- police officer.

Petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 4031) of Alice Hanlon Peisch (by vote of the town) relative to increasing the age limit for retired police officers serving as special police officers in the town of Weston;

Weston,-- police officers.

Severally to the committee on Public Service.

Resolutions.

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

Resolutions (filed by Mr. Brownsberger) “commending the Armenian American Community of the commonwealth, the Armenian Heritage Foundation, Friends of Armenian Heritage Park, and former State Representatives Rachel Kaprielian and Peter Koutoujian on the occasion of the commemoration of the Armenian Genocide.”

Armenian Genocide.

Report of Committees.

By Ms. Lovely, for the committees on Rules of the two branches, acting concurrently, that Joint Rule 12 be suspended on the Senate petition of Michael F. Rush, Paul McMurtry and John H. Rogers for legislation to extend MBTA service of The Ride to the town of Foxborough.

Foxborough,-- MBTA Ride. SD2639

Senate Rule 36 was suspended, on motion of Mr. O’Connor, and the report was considered forthwith. Joint Rule 12 was suspended; and the petition (accompanied by bill) was referred to the committee on Transportation.

Sent to the House for concurrence.

PAPER FROM THE HOUSE.

A petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 4032) of James J. O’Day for legislation to establish a sick leave bank for Dana Johnson, an employee of the Department of Children and Families,-- **was referred, in concurrence, under suspension of Joint Rule 12, to the committee on Public Service.**

Dana Johnson,-- sick leave.

Moment of Silence.

At the request of the Chair (Ms. Edwards), the members, guests and staff stood in a moment of silence and reflection to the memory of Philip W. Johnston.

Moment of silence.

Order Adopted.

On motion of Mr. O’Connor,--

Ordered, That when the Senate adjourns today, it adjourn to meet again on Tuesday next at eleven o’clock A.M.

Time of meeting.

Adjournment in Memory of Philip W. Johnston.

The Senator from Plymouth and Norfolk, Mr. O’Connor, and the Senator from Bristol and Plymouth, Mr. Montigny moved that when the Senate adjourns today, it does so in memory of Philip W. Johnston.

Philip W. Johnston, a longtime resident of Marshfield, former lawmaker, and lifelong advocate for social justice, passed away on April 5, 2025.

Born in Chelsea on July 21, 1944, Phil was the third of five siblings and the only son.

His father, Philip W. Johnston II, held graduate degrees from Harvard University and supervised the maternal and child health section at the state Department of Public Health.

His mother, Elizabeth Foley Johnston, stayed home to raise the children as the family lived in Worcester, Natick, and Wellesley.

At Wellesley High School, Phil became involved with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, a prominent national civil rights organization.

From an early age, Philip was drawn to public service and standing up for marginalized and vulnerable communities.

In the 1960s, he protested outside the Wellesley Woolworth's store in solidarity with four Black college students who had staged a sit-in after being denied service at a Woolworth's lunch counter in North Carolina during the civil rights movement. This protest came to be after he saw this sit-in on the local news. He told his mom he wanted to do something, so he and his mom, equipped with homemade signs, launched a two person protest.

He earned a bachelor's degree from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, where he met Beverly Balestrier when they sat next to each other in a Spanish class.

She became a social worker and later focused on volunteer work in Marshfield, most notably serving on the Board of Public Health.

Phil went on to receive a master's degree from the Harvard Kennedy School and worked as a social worker after college.

He was elected five times to serve in the Massachusetts House of Representatives from 1975-1984.

In 1984, he joined the Dukakis administration as Secretary of Health and Human Services. In this role, Phil bucked the status quo and launched major positive reforms to mental and behavioral health, community health, and created many of the strongest foundations upon our current system still stands. He would routinely and quietly visit all of the hospitals, programs, and non-profits under HHS. Meeting with patients, providers, and families. This gave him a firsthand human approach to governing and showed the character and dedication of who Phil Johnston was.

In 1992, he was appointed by President Bill Clinton as the New England Director for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, where he served until 1996. He brought his own touch to this role too and advocated for every man, woman, and child to have accessible and quality health care, no matter their ability to pay.

From 2000 to 2007, Phil served as chairman of the Massachusetts Democratic Party. He was a dedicated supporter of his party and played an instrumental role in numerous campaigns throughout the Commonwealth and the nation.

Beyond his elected roles, Phil was the founding Executive Director of the Robert F. Kennedy Children's Action Corps—now part of RFK Community Alliance, a nonprofit created to provide programs for at-risk youth.

He also served on the Board of Directors of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts and, in 2002, was appointed chair of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation's board.

He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Beverly R. Johnston; his daughter, Ellen Johnston of Boston, MA; his son, Robert Johnston of Los Angeles, CA, and his wife, Joanne Katsch; and his granddaughter, Priscilla Johnston.

Son of the late Philip W. and Elizabeth (Foley) Johnston, he is also survived by his sisters, Beth Healey of Princeton, NJ, and Suzanne Knight of Milton, MA.

UNCORRECTED PROOF.

Phil was a true champion for the Commonwealth, dedicated advocate for the sick and vulnerable, and a voice to the voiceless. He believed in people, he believed in the positive power of government, and he believed in the causes he knew to be right and true. He worked tirelessly for the greater good, and we are all beneficiaries of his dedication. His was a life of service well-lived and genuine. He will be forever loved and never forgotten.

The Massachusetts State Senate offers its condolences to his loved ones.

Accordingly, as a mark of respect to the memory of Philip W. Johnston, at twelve minutes past eleven o'clock A.M., on motion of Mr. O'Connor the Senate adjourned to meet again on Tuesday next at eleven o'clock A.M.
