

May 5, 2026

Dear Members of the Massachusetts State Senate,

For the eighth time as the Chair of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, I have the great honor to present the Committee's annual recommendations for the General Appropriations Act—the Fiscal Year 2027 (FY 2027) Budget.

Thank you to Senate President Karen Spilka for her friendship and close counsel. Because of her longstanding confidence in me to lead this Committee, we have worked together – in partnership – to prioritize our Senate values, meet our shared priorities, and lead with a steady and stable hand. It is this teamwork that has paid dividends, produced results, and made us more resilient, as we move Massachusetts forward through turbulent economic times.

Thank you to all my colleagues for lending your voices and for your tireless commitment and advocacy. Because of you, we constructed this Senate budget, brick by brick, and line by line, over the course of these last few months. The time, effort, and dedication that went into producing this Committee budget reflects the honorable work of all 40 Senators who serve to help their constituents, deliver for their districts, and support pragmatic policy making that upholds our values and preserves the integrity of the Senate as a body.

Thank you to the members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, especially Vice Chair Senator Jo Ann Comerford of Northampton, Assistant Vice Chair Senator Paul Feeney of Foxborough, and Ranking Minority Member Senator Patrick O'Connor of Weymouth for their help and input in writing the Committee's FY 2027 budget recommendations.

Thank you to our friends in the House Committee on Ways & Means, especially Chair Aaron Michlewitz and his team. I am grateful for the strong partnership that Chair Michlewitz and I have developed over these last seven plus years. We have been incredibly clear-eyed about our state's future, spearheading budgets that have prioritized fiscal responsibility, and made thoughtful investments to make life better for our residents.

Finally, thank you to our friends in the Healey-Driscoll Administration, Secretary Matthew Gorzkowicz and his team in the Executive Office for Administration and Finance for their cooperation throughout the budget development process. Because of the Secretary's continued collaboration with us in the Legislature and his focus on responsible fiscal stewardship, Massachusetts

remains a beacon of hope and economic resiliency during this time of uncertainty for our residents and our communities.

Today, we hear from families struggling to afford food, from seniors choosing between medication and meals, and from small businesses working to make payroll in the face of the rising cost of doing business. Prices that soared during the pandemic have never come back to earth as our residents across the Commonwealth continue to feel the squeeze and work to make ends meet. This is due in large part to a shifting economic landscape where federal funding cuts, policy shifts and stubborn inflation have led to instability for our communities.

As we brace for more uncertainty and volatility, along with the fate of ballot initiatives, we must chart a steady course forward knowing the road ahead requires careful vigilance. We must strive to mitigate these impacts, preserve our capacity to deliver core services, and build a more hopeful and resilient future for our state. Mindful of these challenges, we in the Senate have remained laser focused on developing a balanced and responsible budget plan that ensures we live within our means by strategically aligning available resources to address ongoing spending pressures.

Therefore, firmly grounded in the principles of sound budgeting and fiscal responsibility, I present the Senate Committee on Ways and Means FY 2027 budget recommendations for your respectful consideration. The Committee's FY 2027 budget proposal reflects the priorities of every single Senator, addresses the needs of our state without raising taxes or fees on residents and businesses, and reflects the efforts of the hard-working staff at Senate Ways and Means.

Emphasizing the Senate's strong bet on every region, city and town during this fiscally challenging time, our committee budget makes record investments in education and local aid. It concludes our long-standing commitment to fully implement the Student Opportunity Act and invests \$7.66 billion in Chapter 70, representing an increase of \$297 million over FY26. It also devotes an additional \$52 million in resources for FY 2027 to support school districts feeling the weight of rising costs, increasing minimum aid for school districts to a historic level of \$160 per pupil. In an additional effort to support every corner of our Commonwealth, this budget provides \$1.376 billion in funding for Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA), significantly increasing this vital source of state aid by \$53 million over FY26 and more equitably distributing these additional resources among our communities statewide. With this package of investments, the Senate is delivering meaningful relief for all 351 cities and towns.

Importantly, as escalating costs in special education, student transportation, and health care collide with the reality of local revenue constraints and declining enrollment, this budget acts upon the Senate President's call to examine the K-12 education formula now that we have satisfied our obligations to the Student Opportunity Act. It revives and reconvenes the Foundation Budget Review Commission to conduct a rigorous review of the current education funding formula and explore how to best allocate resources to adequately and fairly reflect the needs of all school districts in our urban, suburban and rural communities.

The Committee's budget also invests significant resources to support the priorities required for a strong and durable fiscal foundation – making investments in early education, housing, transportation, health care, and our state's safety net responsible for assisting our most vulnerable residents. It focuses on fostering new housing production through a series of provisions that streamline local permitting with the goal of making Massachusetts more affordable for families and young adults.

Our budget also dedicates resources to make higher education more affordable, combat hunger, maintain critical safety net programs, strengthen food security initiatives, safeguard the delivery of mental health services, and maintain programs for our growing aging population and individuals with disabilities. It also continues our state's support for our veterans who have served honorably to protect our way of life, while investing resources to ensure our first responders, police, and fire personnel continue to keep our communities and the Commonwealth safe.

Again, thank you to my good friend, Senate President Karen Spilka, all my colleagues, and the members of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means.

In the days and weeks ahead, I am confident that we – in the Senate – will continue to work together to pass a balanced and fiscally responsible FY 2027 budget plan that reflects our shared priorities and strives to build a hopeful, more resilient future for our Commonwealth.

For the Committee,



Michael J. Rodrigues
Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means