

MassSenate

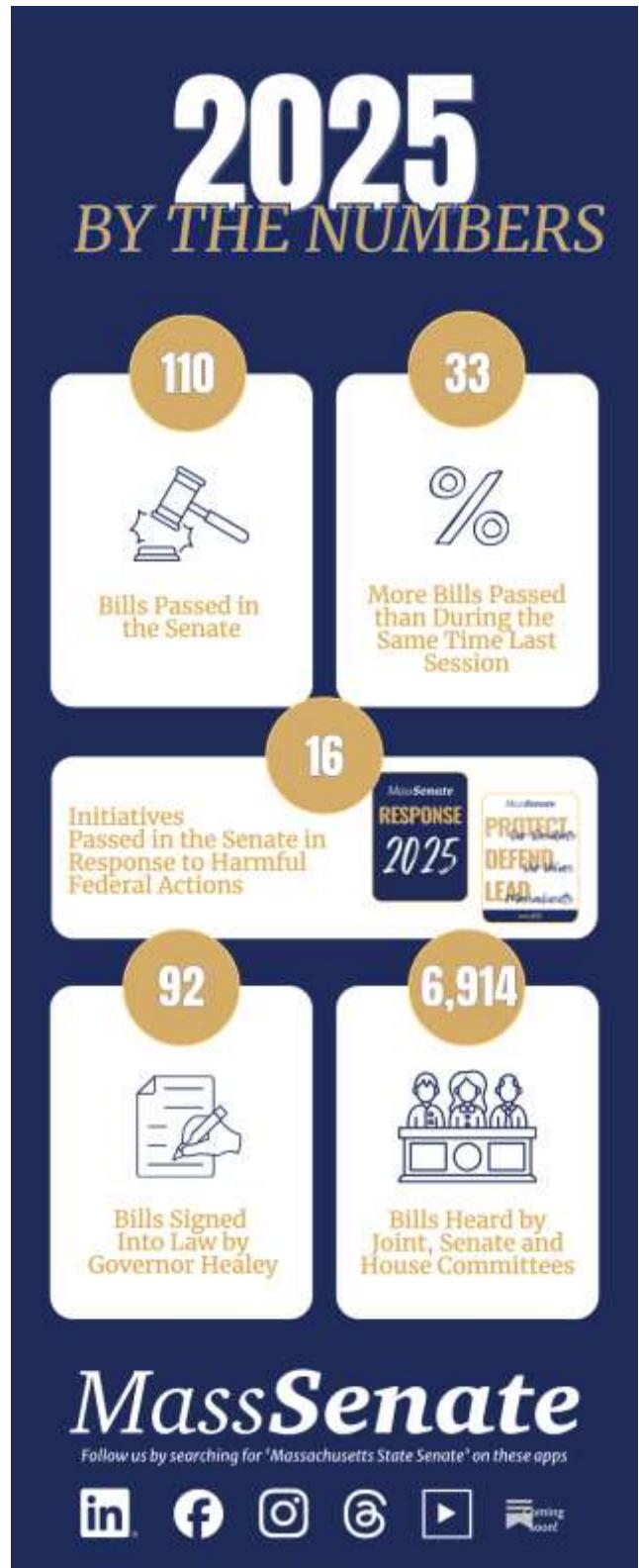
Massachusetts State Senate 2025 Year in Review

Trends

-  Our historic agreement on *Joint Rules* allows for **greater transparency and efficiency**—with nearly 7,000 bills having *received a public hearing* in 2025.
-  Our laser focus on **affordability** is addressing a pressing concern here and nationwide.
-  Our *Steering & Policy Committee* is looking at the best ways to **push back on federal policies that may harm Massachusetts**.

Highlights

-  Passed a bill to make **K-12 schools cell phone free**, a move *supported by 2 out of 3 parents with students* according to a recent poll.
-  Passed one of the **nation's strongest data privacy bills**, giving *consumers more control* over their data and with a focus on *protecting children*.
-  Continued our commitment to **reproductive freedom**, protecting health care providers and **patients**, and preserving **rights for transgender citizens** through the *Shield 2.0 Act—now law*.
-  Fought back against **politically motivated book bans** while *protecting librarians and educators* from personal attacks.
-  Made it **illegal** for landlords to **pass the cost of brokers' fees onto renters**.



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Affordability

FISCAL YEAR 2025 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET FUNDING FOR MBTA INCOME-ELIGIBLE REDUCED FARE PROGRAM

Supports low-income public transit riders with lower incomes with an investment of \$20 million in Fair Share funding for the MBTA's income-eligible reduced fare program.

Bill H.4227 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on June 24, 2025

FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET POLICY PROVISION ON EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT SAVINGS

Helps thousands of private sector workers prepare for a secure retirement by creating a statewide retirement savings program for employees whose workplaces do not otherwise provide access to a savings plan.

Bill H.4240 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Enacted by the Senate on June 30, 2025

FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET POLICY PROVISION ON RESIDENTIAL BROKERS' FEES

Requires any residential broker fee to be paid by the party that reaches out to the broker, ensuring that landlords do not initiate contact and then pass fees on to tenants.

Bill H.4240 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on July 4, 2025

FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET FUNDING FOR TUITION-FREE COMMUNITY COLLEGE EDUCATION

Supports students pursuing no-cost college degrees on community college campuses by fully funding the *MassEducate* program with a \$120 million allocation.

Bill H.4240 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on July 4, 2025

FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET POLICY PROVISION ON PERMANENT FARE-FREE REGIONAL TRANSIT

Builds on the successful fare-free regional transit initiative by permanently codifying fare-free service, allowing all passengers to utilize regional transit authorities for no cost.

Bill H.4240 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on July 4, 2025

FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET FUNDING FOR SCHOOL MEALS

Ensures all students in Massachusetts receive free breakfast and lunch at school, regardless of their family's income, with \$180 million in budget funding. Supplemented in a November appropriations bill with an additional \$12 million.

Bill H.4240 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on July 4, 2025

AN ACT RELATIVE TO FAIRNESS IN DEBT COLLECTION

Protects against predatory debt collection practices by limiting how long consumer debts can be collected, adding transparency to the process, and ensuring people can keep more of their wages.

Bill S.2559 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Passed by the Senate on July 17, 2025

FISCAL YEAR 2025 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET FUNDING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENT SUPPORT

Maintains financial aid benefits for students attending public colleges and universities through the establishment of a student support fund. The bill also appropriates \$18.3 million to strengthen student financial aid assistance and maintain existing stipends for students.

Bill H.4761 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on November 25, 2025

Active Military



AN ACT TO ENHANCE ACCESS, INCLUSION, SUPPORT AND EQUITY FOR MILITARY CONNECTED FAMILIES

Provides enhanced safety, stability and educational opportunities for military families.

Bill S.2709 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Passed by the Senate on November 6, 2025

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AN ACT CLARIFYING THE DUTIES OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

Ensures a clear chain of command exists within the National Guard and that National Guard members receive training on how to identify whether orders violate Constitutional or statutory rights.

Bill S.2708 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Passed by the Senate on November 6, 2025

FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET POLICY PROVISION ON GOLD STAR SPOUSE ANNUITIES

Removes an unfair penalty from Gold Star Family spouses whose loved ones fell in the line of duty, by allowing them to remarry without losing their state annuity.

Bill H.4240 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on July 4, 2025

Children, Families & Persons with Disabilities

FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET FUNDING FOR PAPPAS AND POCASSET FACILITIES

Fully funds operations at the Pappas Rehabilitation Hospital for Children operated by the Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Pocasset Mental Health Center operated by the Department of Mental Health (DMH), with \$31 million and \$4.8 million respectively. Commissions a study of the Pappas facility's finances, services, and future.

Bill H.4240 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on July 4, 2025

AN ACT RELATIVE TO THE UNIFORM CHILD CUSTODY JURISDICTION AND ENFORCEMENT ACT

Aligns Massachusetts child custody procedures with 49 other states to ease the resolution of custody issues when parents live in different states.

Bill S.2550 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Passed by the Senate on July 17, 2025

AN ACT AMENDING CERTAIN LAWS RELATIVE TO INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Scrubs archaic and offensive words for people with disabilities from numerous state laws, while bringing law books up to date with relevant 21st century definitions for people with developmental or intellectual disabilities.

Bill S.2563 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Passed by the Senate on July 24, 2025

FISCAL YEAR 2025 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET POLICY PROVISION ON INSTITUTIONAL RECORDS TRANSPARENCY

Opens up access to former residents' patient records from more than 25 state-run institutions, many now closed, for people with intellectual or developmental disabilities or mental health conditions.

Bill H.4761 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on November 25, 2025

Civil Rights, Constitutional Safeguards & Immigration



AN ACT AMENDING CERTAIN ARCHAIC LAWS

Removes offensive language from state statutes and repeals outdated, unconstitutional laws that impinge upon individuals' civil rights.

Bill S.2564 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Passed by the Senate on July 24, 2025



FISCAL YEAR 2025 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET POLICY PROVISION ON NAME-CHANGE PETITIONS

Removing the automatic requirement of a public legal notice for name-change petitions filed in court.

Bill H.4761 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on November 25, 2025



AN ACT REGARDING FREE EXPRESSION

Protects freedom of thought in Massachusetts schools and public libraries and safeguards open access to books and other educational materials.

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[Bill S.2726](#) | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Passed by the Senate on November 13, 2025



FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET FUNDING FOR IMMIGRANT LEGAL DEFENSE

Provides \$5 million to implement an immigration legal services program to increase access to legal representation, advice, and advocacy for immigrants and refugees who are facing enhanced legal threats from the federal government.

[Bill H.4240](#) | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on July 4, 2025



FISCAL YEAR 2025 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET POLICY PROVISION ON THE RIGHTS OF SCHOOLCHILDREN

Codifies protections for K-12 students who are English language learners.

[Bill S.2575](#) | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on August 5, 2025



RESOLUTIONS RESCINDING PREVIOUS ARTICLE V CONVENTION APPLICATIONS

Rescinds all prior Massachusetts calls for a federal Constitutional Convention under Article V of the U.S. Constitution.

Resolution S.2684 | [Resolution Text](#) | [Press Release](#) | Conveyed to the U.S. Congress on November 19, 2025

Consumer Protection & Public Safety



AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE MASSACHUSETTS DATA PRIVACY ACT

Establishes clear rights for Massachusetts residents regarding their personal data, including the right to know what information is being collected and the ability to opt out of having their data used for targeted advertising or sold to other companies.

[Bill S.2619](#) | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Passed by the Senate on September 25, 2025



FISCAL YEAR 2025 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET POLICY PROVISION ON IMPERSONATION OF AN OFFICER

Criminalizes the impersonation of a federal officer and increases penalties for impersonating a public official, including a federal officer.

[Bill H.4761](#) | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on November 25, 2025

AN ACT FACILITATING BETTER INTERACTIONS BETWEEN POLICE OFFICERS AND PERSONS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

Codifies a Senate-initiated program, proactively implemented by State Police, to promote positive interactions between police and people with autism.

[Bill S.2565](#) | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Passed by the Senate on July 24, 2025

AN ACT UPDATING THE MOVE OVER LAW

Protects utility workers and stranded motorists with new roadway safety requirements for drivers who pass by utility vehicles or disabled vehicles with flashing lights.

[Bill S.2653](#) | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Passed by the Senate on October 16, 2025

AN ACT RELATIVE TO ASSAULT AND BATTERY UPON A TRANSIT WORKER

Responds to a rise in assaults on transit workers by stepping up the penalties for such assaults, while ensuring all transit workers are covered.

[Bill H.4645](#) | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on December 12, 2025

Economic Development & Small Business

AN ACT MODERNIZING THE COMMONWEALTH'S CANNABIS LAWS

Streamlines and increases accountability at the Cannabis Control Commission and adjusts possession and licensing limits now that the industry is established.

Bill S.2749 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Passed by the Senate on November 19, 2025

Education

FISCAL YEAR 2025 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET FUNDING FOR EDUCATION WORKFORCE SUPPORTS

Directs Fair Share funding toward supporting the education workforce, including \$20 million for rate increases that boost early education providers and \$2.475 million for scholarships and loan forgiveness to encourage students to pursue a teaching career in the Massachusetts public schools.

Bill H.4227 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on June 24, 2025

FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET EDUCATION FUNDING

Fully funds and implements the fifth year of the Student Opportunity Act and allocates \$7.36 billion in Chapter 70 aid for local schools. Invests \$475 million for the Commonwealth Cares for Children (C3) Grant Program to support the early education sector.

Bill H.4240 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on July 4, 2025

AN ACT TO PROMOTE STUDENT LEARNING AND MENTAL HEALTH

Prioritizes classrooms as places of learning and supports students' wellbeing by taking cell phones out of the classroom for the entire school day, with reasonable exceptions.

Bill S.2561 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Passed by the Senate on July 31, 2025

Health Care & Public Health



AN ACT STRENGTHENING HEALTH CARE PROTECTIONS IN THE COMMONWEALTH

Known as the *Shield Act 2.0*, fortifies protections for those seeking and providing reproductive and transgender care.

Bill S.2543 | [Bill Text](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on August 7, 2025



FISCAL YEAR 2025 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET FUNDING FOR MEDICAID OUTREACH

Allocates \$10 million to Health Care For All (HCFA) for a new outreach and education campaign on Medicaid work reporting requirements.

Bill H.4761 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on November 25, 2025



FISCAL YEAR 2025 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET POLICY PROVISION ON IMMUNIZATION STANDARDS

Grants authority to the Department of Public Health (DPH) Commissioner to determine routine childhood immunizations and vaccination schedules rather than relying on the recommendations of the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.

Bill H.4761 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on November 25, 2025

FISCAL YEAR 2025 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET FUNDING FOR FISCALLY STRAINED HEALTH CARE INSTITUTIONS

Allocates \$234 million in strategically targeted aid for fiscally strained hospitals and community health centers.

Bill H.4530 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on September 22, 2025

FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET FUNDING FOR PUBLIC SAFETY HEALTH & WELLNESS

Funds firefighter cancer screenings, including advance blood testing and imaging, through a municipal grant program. Expands funding for On-Site Academy to provide critical incident stress management and mental health support for firefighters, police officers, EMTs, and corrections officers.

Bill H.4240 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on July 4, 2025

AN ACT RELATIVE TO FENTANYL TEST STRIPS

Guards against the flow of deadly synthetic opioids into Massachusetts by ensuring that people can safely and legally use testing equipment to detect the presence of fentanyl.

Bill S.1057 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Passed by the Senate on September 18, 2025

AN ACT TO INCREASE ACCESS TO DISPOSABLE MENSTRUAL PRODUCTS

Expands access to menstrual products in places where people need them, namely in public schools, family shelters, jails, and prisons.

Bill S.2640 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Passed by the Senate on October 16, 2025

AN ACT RELATIVE TO MENSTRUAL PRODUCT INGREDIENT DISCLOSURE

Requires that menstrual product manufacturers make lists of ingredients clearly available on their packaging and websites.

Bill S.2641 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Passed by the Senate on October 16, 2025

Housing & Food Security



FISCAL YEAR 2025 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET POLICY PROVISION ON EVICTION AND FORECLOSURE

Protects furloughed or otherwise unpaid federal employees from residential eviction or foreclosure during and immediately after any federal shutdown.

Bill H.4761 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on November 25, 2025



FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET POLICY PROVISION ON HOUSING CONSTRUCTION AFFORDABILITY

Studies how the removal of sales tax for certain housing supply items might reduce housing construction costs, in response to pressures around tariffs.

Bill H.4240 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on July 4, 2025



FISCAL YEAR 2025 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET FUNDING FOR SNAP

Provides \$10 million for operational and technical enhancements at the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) to improve recipients' access to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits with the aim of forestalling harmful federal cuts.

Bill H.4761 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on November 25, 2025

Legislative Efficiency & Transparency

JOINT RULES OF THE 194TH GENERAL COURT

Ensures committee votes are made available online, sets earlier deadlines for committee reports, requires publicly posted bill summaries, and requires added review time for conference committee reports. Gives members of the public lengthier notice periods ahead of hearings and guaranteed livestream access.

[Joint Rules Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Adopted on June 26, 2025

Transportation

FISCAL YEAR 2025 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET FUNDING FOR TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

Sends supplemental Fair Share funding to towns, cities, and transit systems including \$73 million for regional transit initiatives, \$103 million in regionally equitable municipal aid for shovel-ready transportation improvements, and \$535 million for upgrades and improvements across the MBTA system.

Bill H.4227 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on June 24, 2025

FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

Supports regional transit authorities with \$209 million, including maintenance of regional bus service, commuter operations, and systemwide fare-free service. Directs \$470 million to the MBTA for operations and infrastructure.

Bill H.4240 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on July 4, 2025