

MASSACHUSETTS SENATE



SESSION REPORT

189th General Court

2015-2016

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COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
THE GENERAL COURT
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133 1053

To the People of Massachusetts:

The accomplishments of the Massachusetts Senate this year are nothing to be quiet about, so this Massachusetts Session Report has been prepared with a small amount of unabashed pride. But it has also been prepared out of a continued sense of solemn duty to our civic responsibility to let the people of the Commonwealth know what the work of the Senate has been this year.

The report is comprehensive, providing more than mere highlights of everything we worked on in the 189th General Court. We break down major bills and special committee work into key, color-coded categories. We have laid our work out in a way that we hope makes it easily accessible and provides enough content so that readers can understand each bill that was passed. But beneath the plain language of bills, excerpts from editorials, quotes from advocates, and infographics you find here, is a subtext that goes straight to the heart of the work we did. This work came from the people.

Every bill we drafted, everything we debated, and everything we voted on came about because we were working to make the Senate more responsive to the needs of the people. We began our work with Commonwealth Conversations and heard from our constituents across the Commonwealth, from Williamstown to Boston and from Cape Ann to Cape Cod. We heard what people want from the legislature, and we worked hard to draft and pass legislation that would meet those needs.

From increasing our reliance on renewable energy to providing equal protection under the law for transgender people, providing protections to make sure women and minorities get equal pay for equal work, municipal modernization, support for emerging technologies like Uber and Lyft, and passing public records reform to make it faster and cheaper for the public to access public records, the Senate did its job and passed legislation so that we can have a government that is truly by and for the people.

The list of accomplishments is too long for this letter, and that's another reason we have produced this book. You will see addresses to websites, Twitter handles, and other references for online information included. We hope that this helps bring more people into the process of government. We want to hear from you, and will continue our Commonwealth Conversations. If you have any questions or want to get involved, please let us know.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stan Rosenberg".

Senate President Stan Rosenberg

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bruce Tarr".

Senate Minority Leader Bruce Tarr

MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

ON

Open and
Transparent
Government

@MA_Senate



Public Records

S.2120 An Act to Improve Public Records



Summary

- 1 Reduces costs for a records requestor, and ensures timely compliance with public records requests. It also prohibits charging for records if the agency or municipality does not provide the records within 15 days of the request or does not respond to the requestor within ten days.
- 2 Limits the amount that state agencies and municipalities can charge for production of the records. The limits are set at 5 cents per page for copies, down from 20-50 cents per page under current law, plus the cost of a storage device.
- 3 Finally, the bill requires state entities and encourages municipalities to post online many commonly requested public records. In addition, records are required to be provided in electronic format unless requested otherwise.

The bill was sponsored by Senator Jason M. Lewis (D-Winchester)



Senator Jason M. Lewis
@SenJasonLewis

Chair, Joint Committee on Public Health



Senator Joan B. Lovely
@SenJoanLovely

Chair, Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight



Senator Donald F. Humason, Jr.
@SenDonHumason

Senate Minority Whip
Conference Committee Member



This Legislation was passed on
February 4, 2016

STATUS



Signed Into Law

The new law brings Massachusetts into line with 47 other states and the federal government by allowing attorney's fees to be awarded to plaintiffs who are victorious in court when denied records.

RESPONSE

**The
Boston
Globe**

"In tackling public records reform this year, a committee of legislators has tried to strike a balance: predictable, timely, and fair access to records, with manageable rules for government in responding."

- *Boston Globe, Editorial*

"Government transparency and accessibility are fundamental to a healthy democracy. This important reform legislation will help bring the Commonwealth into the 21st century and strengthen the public trust in our government institutions."

- *Senator Jason M. Lewis*



INFOGRAPHICS

PUBLIC RECORDS

- Quicker Responses
- Lower Charges
- Effective Remedies

ACCESS REFORM

#PublicRecords



@Ma_Senate

MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

ON

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

@MA_Senate



License Suspension Bill



S.2014 An Act Relative to Motor Vehicle License Suspension

Summary

- 1 This bill repeals the current law that subjects individuals convicted of a non-violent drug offense to an automatic license suspension for up to five years and a license reinstatement fee of \$500, even if the offense does not involve motor vehicles in any way.
- 2 The bill would have no effect on license suspension penalties for driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, and removes the outdated state requirement that penalizes every drug offense with a license suspension, even for non-driving offenses.
- 3 Driving records currently include non-driving license suspensions. The bill prevents these checks, which harm the chances of employment for individuals convicted of a drug offense, and shields driving records revealing CORI information from public view.

The bill was sponsored by Senator Harriette L. Chandler (D-Worcester)



Senator Harriette L. Chandler

@Sen_Chandler

Senate Majority Leader
Conference Committee Member



Senator William N. Brownsberger

@WBrownsberger

Chair, Joint Committee on the Judiciary



Senator Thomas M. McGee

@TomMcGeeDSC

Chair, Joint Committee on Transportation
Conference Committee Member



Senator Bruce E. Tarr

@SenBruceTarr

Senate Minority Leader
Conference Committee Member

STATUS



Signed into Law

The Senate continues taking important steps toward reforming our criminal justice system by taking ineffective and unfair laws off the books, which have made it harder for individuals who have paid for their mistakes to become productive members of society.

RESPONSE



"This bill is a real life changer that will promote job security and dignity to those of us who have already paid for their mistakes."

—
- *Cassandra Bensahih, Director of Ex-Prisoners and Prisoners Organizing for Community Advancement*

"Adoption of this legislation provides those men and women impacted with greater access to job opportunities and substance abuse treatment, both of which are key ingredients to reducing recidivism and keeping our communities safe. It also allows them to more fully participate in the lives of their family, including driving children, spouses and elderly parents to medical appointments."

—
Peter Koutoujian, Middlesex County Sheriff



INFOGRAPHICS

WHY?



“The license suspension law is as ineffective as it is harsh. The law should be repealed so that those convicted of drug offenses have a better chance to rebuild their lives.”



“A suspended license is a high hurdle for some to clear. It makes it difficult to get to a job, get to drug counseling appointments or pick up the kids from school.”

The Juvenile Justice Bill

Bill S.2424 An Act promoting transparency, best practices, and better outcomes for children and communities



Summary

- 1 This omnibus bill encourages rehabilitation and positive future outcomes for youth, reduces recidivism, and ensures fair treatment of children.
- 2 The bill excludes very young children from delinquency proceedings by raising the lower limit of juvenile court jurisdiction from 7 to 11 years of age, while also ensuring they have access to services from the Department of Youth Services.
- 3 The bill creates a task force to make recommendations on ways to coordinate and modernize the data systems used to collect and report juvenile caseload and outcome data.

The omnibus bill was sponsored by Senator Karen E. Spilka (D-Ashland)



Senator Karen E. Spilka
@KarenSpilka

Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means



Senator Cynthia S. Creem
@cindycreem

Assistant Majority Leader
Chair, Senate Committee on Ethics



This Legislation was passed on
July 8, 2016



Bill Passed Yeas 31 to Nays 9

STATUS



Sent to House

In 2013, only 40 children under the age of 11 were arraigned statewide, most for fighting or destruction of property. Children ages 7 to 10 are typically elementary school students and highly unlikely to be competent to stand trial. If necessary, very young children will be subject to Juvenile Court through Care and Protection or Child Requiring Assistance proceedings.

RESPONSE

**The
Washington
Times**

"The Massachusetts Senate has passed a bill designed to improve the states juvenile justice system. Supporters of the bill approved Tuesday say it will help encourage rehabilitation, reduce recidivism by youthful offenders and ensure the fair treatment of children."

- *Washington Times, Associated Press*

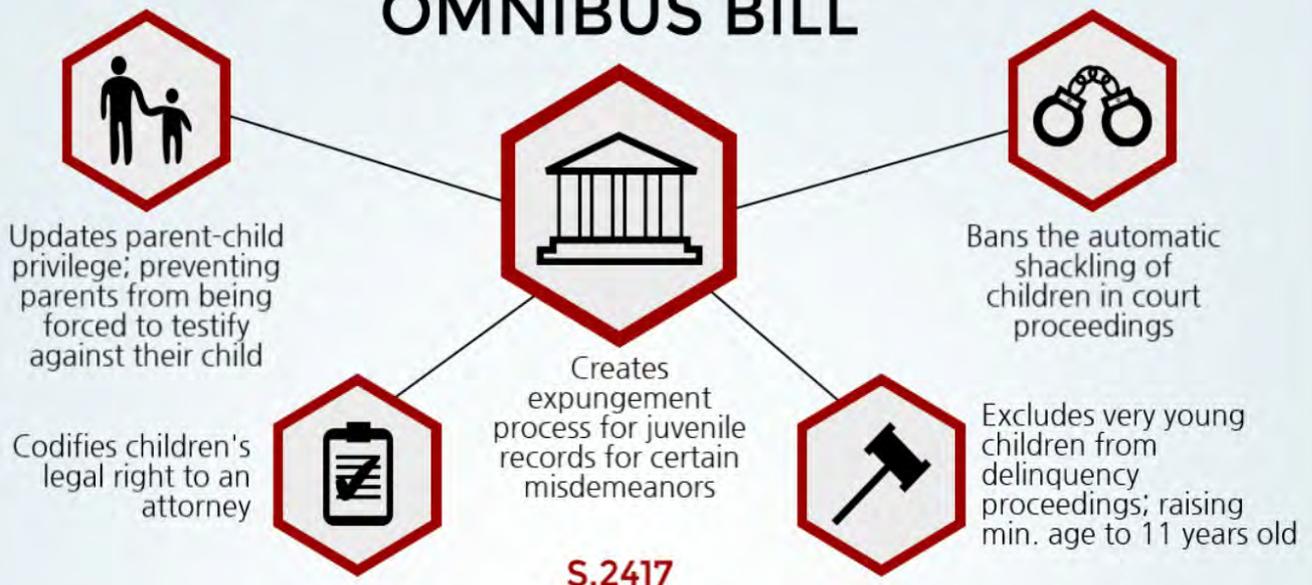
"I strongly believe that this legislation will strengthen our juvenile justice system and better address the risks and needs of justice-involved youth in the Commonwealth. Young people possess a high capacity for positive change, and the carefully crafted provisions of this bill balance our obligation to assist in their rehabilitation with our duty to protect public safety."

- *Senator Cynthia S. Creem*



INFOGRAPHICS

JUVENILE JUSTICE REFORM OMNIBUS BILL



Tagging & Vandalism



S.727 An Act Relative to Tagging

S.728 An Act Relative to the Penalty for Vandalism

Summary

- 1 Tagging is defined under the law as “Whoever sprays or applies paint or places a sticker upon a building, wall, fence, sign, tablet, gravestone, monument or other object or thing on a public way or adjoined to it, or in public view, or on private property...”
- 2 Vandalism is defined as “Whoever intentionally, willfully and maliciously or wantonly, paints, marks, scratches, etches or otherwise marks, injures, mars, defaces or destroys the real or personal property of another including but not limited to a wall, fence, building, sign, rock, monument, gravestone or tablet...”
- 3 S.727 Removes the penalty of a drivers license suspension for those found guilty of “tagging.”
- 4 S.728 Removes the penalty of a drivers license suspension for those found guilty of "vandalism".

The bill was sponsored by Senator William N. Brownsberger (D-Belmont)



Senator William N. Brownsberger
@WBrownsberger
Chair, Joint Committee on the Judiciary



This Legislation was passed on
April 14, 2016



Bill Passed Yeas 28 to Nays 7

STATUS



Sent to House

The Senate continues its mission to review and revise Massachusetts laws to align with national best practices. These bills aim to further reduce recidivism, prison population, and taxpayer costs while enhancing public safety.

RESPONSE



"Advocates for the offenders say removing someone's license makes it harder for them to hold down a job and support their family without returning to crime."

- *Masslive*

"The Senate has been actively reforming the criminal justice system to reduce recidivism, adopt best practices and produce better outcomes."

- *Wicked Local, Medford*



INFOGRAPHICS

**MA Senate
PASSES**

**An Act Relative
to Tagging**

S.727

**MA Senate
PASSES**

**An Act Relative
to Vandalism**

S.728

**Removes the one year drivers license
suspension penalty for tagging and vandalism**

Larceny Bill



S.2176 An Act relative to larceny

Summary

- 1 Raises the threshold of felony larceny and other property charges from \$250 to \$1,500, putting Massachusetts in line with other states.
- 2 A \$1,500 threshold is not historically high for Massachusetts. In 1906, the cutoff was set at \$100, which equates to roughly \$2,400 in today's dollars.
- 3 The current larceny threshold has not been updated since 1987.

The bill was the result of collaboration between multiple Senators



Senator William N. Brownsberger
Chair, Joint Committee on the Judiciary
@WBrownsberger



Senator James B. Eldridge
@JamieEldridgeMA



Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz
@SoniaChangDiaz



Senator Patricia D. Jehlen
@SenJehlen



This legislation was passed on
March 10, 2016

STATUS



Sent to House

RESPONSE

**The
Boston
Globe**

“If you have a felony on your criminal record, it makes a big difference for applying for jobs: You probably won’t be hired. That conviction is going to create barriers for all kinds of opportunities”

Pauline Quirion, director of the criminal records sealing project at Greater Boston Legal Services

“If you stole a cell phone, that would be a felony under the current \$250 threshold. Now at \$1,500, it's something you would think is more appropriate.”

Lew Finfer, a member of the Jobs Not Jails Coalition

**The
Boston
Globe**

INFOGRAPHICS

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

MA Senate passes Larceny bill raising the threshold from \$250 to \$1500

@Ma_Senate



#CJReformMA

MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

ON

The Environment

@MA_Senate



The Energy Bill



S. 2372 An Act to Promote Energy Diversity

Summary

- 1 This legislation is another step forward in diversifying our energy supply while moving Massachusetts towards our green energy future. This bill reduces our reliance on fossil fuels while also addressing unacceptably high electricity rates.
- 2 To meet Massachusetts' energy demand, the bill allows for the procurement of approximately 1,600MW of offshore wind.
- 3 In an effort to enhance ratepayer savings associated with the procurement of renewable energy resources, this bi-partisan legislation authorizes the use of energy storage technologies paired with renewable power generation.

The Senate bill was offered as an amendment to the energy bill passed by the House of Representatives



Senator Benjamin Downing
@BenjaminDowning

Chair of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy



Senator Marc R. Pacheco
@MarcRPacheco

Chair, Senate Committee on Global Warming and Climate Change

Vice Chair, Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy



Senator Bruce E. Tarr
@SenBruceTarr

Senate Minority Leader

Conference Committee Member

STATUS



Signed into Law

Massachusetts leads the nation in energy efficiency. This bill embraces new technology and builds on additional clean energy resources to replace aging power plants that are going offline and move the Commonwealth closer to its emissions reduction goals under the Global Warming Solutions Act.

RESPONSE

**The
Boston
Globe**

"The good news about the Senate energy legislation approved last week is that it means both chambers and the governor have now backed strong plans to help the Commonwealth break its dependency on fossil fuels."

- *Boston Globe, Editorial*

"The Senate energy bill will increase energy from offshore wind with sufficient scale to reduce costs for customers while creating manufacturing and high-tech jobs in our state. It ensures onshore wind, hydro and local renewables will make up a big part of our energy portfolio."

- *George Bachrach, President Environmental League of Massachusetts*



INFOGRAPHICS

Senate Energy Bill

Planning for the future & protecting ratepayers by increasing:



In energy markets

S.2372



For ratepayers



Of resources

@Ma_Senate

The Agriculture Bill



S.2286 An Act Promoting Agriculture in the Commonwealth

Summary

- 1 This bill provides opportunities and protections to current and prospective farmers throughout Massachusetts, increases access and availability of locally grown food products, and invests in educational and agricultural programs to further grow the industry.
- 2 The legislation reflects recommendations from the Massachusetts Local Food Action Plan, finalized in December, 2015. The legislation utilizes state-owned land for non-commercial community gardens and farmers markets, and also allows farmer brewers and distillers to sell products at farmers markets.
- 3 To incentivize farmers and drive local food production, the bill eases regulatory restrictions that may currently inhibit agricultural modernization by establishing commissions to assess the management of state protected farmland and the agricultural plumbing code.

The bill was sponsored by Senator Anne M. Gobi (D-Spencer)

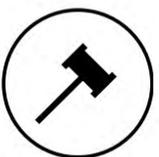


Senator Anne M. Gobi
@AnneGobi

Chair, Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture



The legislation was passed on
May 5, 2016



Passed Yeas 36 Nays 1

STATUS



Sent to the House

There are 7,755 farms in Massachusetts on over 523,000 acres to produce \$492 million in agricultural products. Massachusetts farms provide employment to nearly 28,000 workers in the Commonwealth. 80% of Massachusetts farms are family owned. 95% fit the category of "small farms" according to the USDA definition of sales below \$250,000. Massachusetts ranks 6th in the nation for number of farms with Community Supported Agriculture (CSA); a 95% increase since 2007.

RESPONSE



"Farming is more than just an industry-for our small, family-owned farms across the Commonwealth, it's a way of life. Farms also enhance the protection of open space and add to our robust tourism industry."

- Senate President Stan Rosenberg

"We are fortunate to have so many people willing to spend their time and finances to make sure the rest of us enjoy a wide array of agricultural products. This bill is a step in recognizing their efforts and to support them moving forward."

- Senator Anne M. Gobi



INFOGRAPHICS

COMPREHENSIVE LEGISLATION ON AGRICULTURE

A big boost to Massachusetts farmers & greater access to locally grown foods!

#MASSGROWN

@MA_SENATE

Zoning Reform

S.2311 An Act Promoting Housing and Sustainable Development

Summary



- 1 The bill changes state zoning laws in a number of ways, including multi-family zoning, accessory or in-law apartments, impact fees for developers, inclusionary zoning, master plan development, and permitting.
- 2 The bill requires communities to designate districts for multi-family units and not to require a special permit. In addition, to help seniors and families with aging parents, the bill allows for accessory apartments, also known as in-law apartments, to be allowed without any special permit for up to five percent of the local housing stock.
- 3 The bill also requires cities and towns to adopt inclusionary zoning, which requires a percentage of the new housing stock to be priced as affordable housing and not as market rate housing. While many cities and towns currently have this requirement, this legislation would allow any municipality to adopt it.

The bill was sponsored by Senator Daniel A. Wolf (D-Harwich)



Senator Daniel A. Wolf
@SenatorDanWolf

Chair, Joint Committee on Labor and Workforce Development
Chair, Senate Committee on Steering and Policy

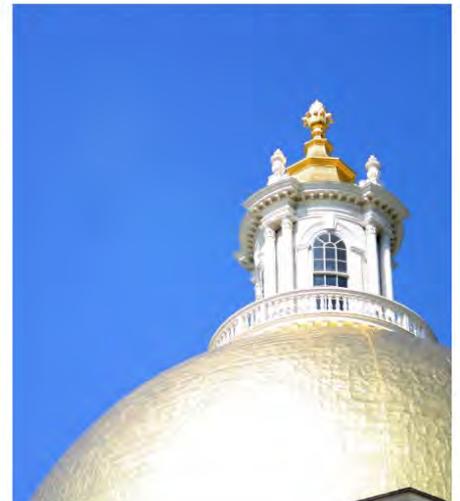


This Legislation was passed on
June 9, 2016



63 Amendments
Were filed and debated

STATUS



Sent to House

Massachusetts currently has some of the highest costs for housing in the country, making it harder for families to purchase homes and businesses, and to create jobs in a region that is affordable for their workers. According to a recent report by the National Low Income Housing Coalition, Massachusetts ranked 7th highest in the cost of housing for minimum wage workers. The report states that a minimum wage worker would have to work an average of 104 hours per week to afford a modestly priced two bedroom apartment.

RESPONSE



"The Senate took a historic vote to modernize housing and land use laws in Massachusetts for the first time in over 40 years. The bill will provide cities and towns with new tools for planning, zoning and permitting."

- *Environmental League of Massachusetts*

"Senate leaders want to clean up those systems so that more affordable housing can get built. The idea is to give cities and towns ways to plan ahead and cooperate with neighbors."

- *Mike Deehan, WGBH News*



INFOGRAPHICS

Impacts of Zoning

Economists estimate that restrictive zoning:

Drives Up
20% 
Housing Prices

Leads to a
20% 
Decline in Employment

@Ma_Senate

S. 2311

#MaHousing

MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

ON

Shared Prosperity

@MA_Senate



Paid Family and Medical Leave



S.2446 An Act establishing a family and medical leave and temporary disability leave insurance program

Summary

- 1 Creates a system for paid, job-protected leave for employees who must take time off from work to recover from their own serious health condition or to care for a new child or ill family member.
- 2 Requires employers to offer employees up to 16 weeks of paid leave for family care and up to 26 weeks for temporary disability leave. Employees would be eligible for benefits after 1,250 hours of service for the employer, the current federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) standard.
- 3 Protects and prevents retaliation against employees who use family or medical leave. Employees who take paid leave must be restored to their previous position, or to a substantially similar position, and they must remain eligible for previously accrued vacation time, sick time, bonuses, advancement or other employment benefits.

The lead Sponsor of this bill was Karen E. Spilka (D- Ashand)



Senator Karen E. Spilka

@KarenSpilka

Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means



Senator Daniel A. Wolf

@SenatorDanWolf

Chair, Joint Committee on Labor and Workforce Development



This Legislation was passed on:
July 30, 2016

STATUS



Sent to House

While certain Massachusetts workers currently have access to unpaid leave under the federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), nearly 40% of workers are not eligible and even those who are eligible don't take it. A 2012 U.S. Department of Labor report points to the inability to afford unpaid leave as the primary reason workers do not take full advantage of leave under FMLA.

RESPONSE

**The
Boston
Globe**

"We have to find a way to embrace it if we want equality to happen. Women bear the burden of care. The truth is, it often falls to women. When we don't have paid leave, it penalizes them."

- Beth Monaghan, Chief Executive of InkHouse
Public Relations

"We applaud the Senate's passage of this legislation, that would guarantee that no one be forced to choose between the job they need and the people they love."

- Unitarian Universalist Massachusetts Action



INFOGRAPHICS

Paid Family and Medical Leave



Up to 16 weeks for Family Care Leave



Up to 26 weeks for Temporary Disability Leave



90% of wages, up to \$1,000 per week, by 2020



Benefit costs may be split 50/50 between employer and employee

@Ma_Senate

S.2446

#PFML

Earned Income Tax Credit



Summary

- 1 The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) is the most effective poverty fighter we have. It fights wage stagnation and helps hard working families make ends meet.
- 2 Increased tax credit for eligible working families from 15% of federal EITC to 23%, putting as much as an additional \$470 into the pockets of working families.
- 3 First increase in 18 years.

Amendment to FY 16 Senate Budget was sponsored by Senators



Senator Benjamin Downing

@BenjaminDowning

Chair of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy



Senator Michael J. Rodrigues

@SenRodrigues

Chair, Joint Committee on Revenue



This Legislation was passed on **May 19, 2015**



Passed 29 Yeas - 11 Nays

STATUS



Signed into Law

RESPONSE

The
Boston
Globe

"Massachusetts' strong economy hasn't helped everyone. The top one-percenters in the state make about 30 times as much as the bottom 99 percent. That's why expanding policies like the earned income tax credit to fight such blatant income inequality should be a priority for state leaders, especially as the legislative session winds down."

- *Boston Globe, Editorial*

"The state Senate rose to the occasion on Tuesday, unveiling a thoughtful response to Governor Baker's budget. In its plan, the Senate's Democratic leadership preserved one of the Republican governor's most important proposals, a boost in the earned income tax credit for the working poor, while offering a credible alternative funding mechanism."

- *Boston Globe, Editorial*

The
Boston
Globe

INFOGRAPHICS

A WIN for WORKING FAMILIES!

 **50%**
Increase in the EITC



400,000 

Working Families eligible to receive the expanded tax cut



The Economic Development Bill

S.2435 An Act Relative to Job Creation, Workforce Development and Infrastructure Investment

Summary

- 1 The legislation strengthens existing programs and authorizes \$1 billion in capital spending over a period of three years for a range of economic development initiatives supporting workers, businesses and communities.
- 2 The bill strengthens existing programs designed to create jobs and connect people to jobs, updating the operation of Regional Economic Development Organizations and streamlining the Economic Development Incentive Program to make the program more flexible and transparent.
- 3 In addition, the bill makes several changes to tax incentives and expenditures and establishes a tax expenditure review unit within the Office of the Inspector General to periodically review and report on the costs and benefits of the state's tax expenditures.



The bill has over 200 Amendments and was co-sponsored by three Senators



Senator Eileen M. Donoghue
@EileenDonoghue

Chair, Joint Committee on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies



Senator Karen E. Spilka
@KarenSpilka

Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means



Senator John F. Keenan
@SenJohnFKeenan

Chair of Senate Committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets



Senator Viriato M. deMacedo
@VinnnydeMacedo

Ranking Minority, Senate Ways and Means Conference Committee Member

STATUS



Signed into Law

The bill establishes a new tax incentive, limited to Massachusetts residents, encouraging families to save for higher education. Individual filers would be able to take a \$1,000 tax deduction for contributions to a prepaid tuition or college savings program, also known as a 529 plan. Married couples filing taxes jointly would be able to take a \$2,000 deduction.

Massachusetts Senate Debates:
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

An Act relative to job creation, workforce development and infrastructure investment

S.2423

Economic Development Bill

A biannual piece of legislation to stimulate growth in local communities across the Commonwealth through projects in:

**Workforce
Development**



Job Creation



**Infrastructure
Investment**



Senator Karen Spilka

Chair of Senate Ways & Means

@KarenSpilka



Senator John Keenan

Chair of Senate
Committee on Bonding,
Capital Expenditures
and State Assets



Senator Eileen Donoghue

Chair of Joint
Committee on Economic
Development and
Emerging Technologies



@Ma_Senate

S.2423

The Pay Equity Bill



S.2107 An Act to Establish Pay Equity

Summary

- 1 This bill seeks to bridge the wage gap between male and female workers and people of color in the Commonwealth by ensuring equal pay for comparable work, establishing pay transparency and requiring fairness in hiring practices.
- 2 The bill encourages pay transparency, while ensuring that salary history is not used against employees when negotiating for a new job. The bill prohibits employers from banning employees from discussing or disclosing information about their own wages or the wages of other employees.
- 3 In addition, the bill includes several updates to the way a pay equity claim may be filed to make it easier for individuals to make timely claims and ease administrative barriers to filing a pay equity claim.

The bill was sponsored by Senator Patricia D. Jehlen (D-Somerville)



Senator Patricia D. Jehlen
@SenJehlen

Chair, Joint Committee on Elder Affairs
Vice Chair, Joint Committee on Education



Senator Karen E. Spilka
@KarenSpilka

Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means



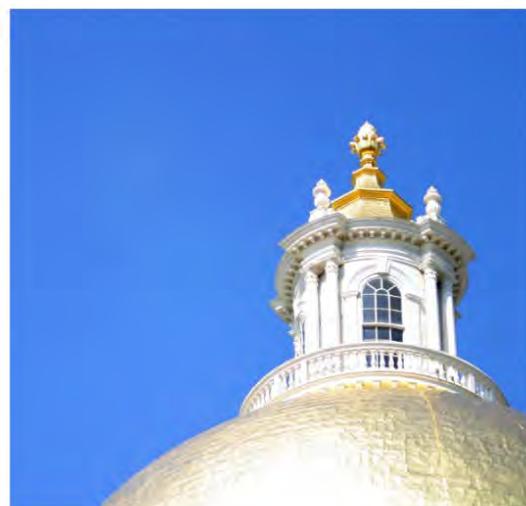
Senator Daniel A. Wolf
@SenatorDanWolf

Chair, Joint Committee on Labor and Workforce Development



This Legislation was passed on
January 28, 2016

STATUS



Signed Into Law

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, a woman working full time in Massachusetts earns 82 cents for every dollar a man in Massachusetts earns. A report by the Institute for Women's Policy Research projects that the gender wage gap in Massachusetts will not close on its own until 2058.

RESPONSE



- Boston Magazine

"Today is a historic day in Massachusetts and I would like to thank our legislative leaders in both the House and the Senate for recognizing the importance of working towards closing the gender wage gap. This bill supports working families, communities, and companies by ensuring equal pay for women and men. It will make Massachusetts more competitive in a global marketplace."

Victoria Budson, chair of the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women

"When President Kennedy signed the Equal Pay Act in 1963, women earned .59¢ to the dollar. It has been 53 years and we've closed the gap to .82¢. Massachusetts cannot - we will not- wait another second to finally achieve equal pay for equal work."

- Senate President Stan Rosenberg



INFOGRAPHICS

MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

PASSES

An Act to Establish
Pay Equity

@MA_SENATE

MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

ON

Innovation Economy

@MA_Senate



The TNC Bill

S.2371 An Act Regulating Transportation Network Companies

Summary



- 1 This bill regulates Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), including Uber and Lyft. The legislation increases consumer protection and ensures that the industry is transparent and accountable.
- 2 The bill creates a strong regulatory framework for operatives and drivers to be administered by the Department of Public Utilities (DPU). It also subjects drivers to strict background checks, sets rules for insurance requirements, and requires drivers to be certified.
- 3 Under the bill, a TNC must provide accurate fare estimates, prohibit fare increases during emergencies and require accommodation of riders with special needs. It also requires a TNC to set up a toll-free customer service hotline on their app and website to better meet the needs and concerns of consumers.

The bill was drafted by a Senate working group to examine the issues around TNC regulation



Senator Karen E. Spilka
@KarenSpilka

Chair, Senate Committee on Ways & Means



Senator James B. Eldridge
@JamieEldridgeMA

Chair, Joint Committee on Financial Services



Senator Donald F. Humason, Jr.
@SenDonHumason

Senate Minority Whip
Conference Committee Member



This legislation was passed on
June 29, 2016



Over 50 amendments were filed and debated

STATUS



Signed into Law

INFOGRAPHICS

Commonsense Regulations for Transportation Network Companies S.2371

- Both drivers and TNCs must carry adequate insurance for each vehicle.
- On a per-ride basis, TNCs will contribute to a 'mitigation fund.' This fund will be distributed to municipalities to offset infrastructure costs.



#MATNCBill

@MA_Senate

#SharedEconomy

Commonsense Regulations for S.2371 Transportation Network Companies

- Safer rides and safer streets
- Diverse transportation options for consumers
- Fosters our innovation culture in the Commonwealth



Public Safety

Strict background check criteria for drivers



Consumer Protection

Greater oversight & regulation of TNCs



Innovation

Allows TNCs room to grow & thrive in our economy

#MATNCBill

@MA_Senate

#SharedEconomy

The Non-Compete Bill



S.2418 An Act Relative to the Judicial Enforcement of Non-Competitive Agreements

Summary

- 1 Non-Compete agreements put restrictions on the kind of job an employee may take after leaving an organization.
- 2 18% of American workers are covered by non-competes. Overuse of non-competes can hamper the economy by keeping wages down and hindering worker mobility.
- 3 This bill would limit non-compete agreements to three months, or other arrangement by mutual agreement.

The front runners that led efforts in the Senate



Senator Daniel A. Wolf (D-Harwich)
@SenatorDanWolf

Chair, Joint Committee on Labor and Workforce Development



Senator William N. Brownsberger (D-Belmont)
@WBrownsberger

Chair, Joint Committee on the Judiciary



The legislation was passed on
July 14, 2016

STATUS



In Conference Committee

The legislation restricts employers from enforcing non-competition agreements against interns, undergraduate and graduate students, employees under 18, hourly workers, employees who are terminated without cause or laid off, independent contractors, and employees whose average weekly earnings are less than two times the average weekly wage in the Commonwealth.

RESPONSE



"This legislation provides fairness and balance to the workplace to allow employees to flourish in their profession and not be confined by overly aggressive non-compete agreements."

- *Senate President Stan Rosenberg, Masslive*

"It respects the legitimate business interests of employers while giving employees negotiating power and protecting them from undue financial harm. As a result, the legislation will boost labor mobility and spur economic growth across Massachusetts."

- *Senator Eileen Donoghue*



INFOGRAPHICS

The Non-Compete Bill

S.2148, "An Act relative to the judicial enforcement of noncompetition agreements."

The bill would restrict non-competition agreements to 3 months and require employers to pay 100% of the employee's annualized earnings during the restricted period, or other mutually-agreed upon consideration negotiated within 30 days following the employee's termination which is of equal or greater value than the garden leave clause.

Leveling the Playing Field for Rooms Tax



S.2423 Economic Development to Further Expand Earned Income Credit Tax

Summary

- 1 Would extend the state's 5.7 % hotel tax to short-term rentals on vacation homes and rooms rented through online companies like Airbnb.
- 2 The money collected by the state would be directed towards an increase in the earned income credit from 23 to 28 percent. This would deliver as much as \$300 extra to over 400,000 families annually.
- 3 Airbnb supports the tax, and the state would leave other regulation to local municipalities.

Senator Michael J. Rodrigues led efforts to pass the Airbnb tax



Senator Michael J. Rodrigues
@SenRodrigues

Chair, Joint Committee on Revenue



The legislation was passed on
July 14, 2016



Passed in the Senate Economic Development Bill

STATUS



Sent to House

With the rapid growth of short-term rentals through Airbnb and similar companies operating as a full-time business, the Department of Revenue estimates that this measure would amount to approximately \$16.7 million in additional annual revenue by 2018 when the new EITC match rate of 28 percent first would go into effect.

RESPONSE

**The
Boston
Globe**

"In a letter to legislators, Airbnb wrote how it couldn't wait to pay its fair share of taxes, something it has done in seven other states and in nearly two dozen US cities."

Shirley Leung, Boston Globe

"To ensure that we pay for targeted expansion of economic opportunities for hardworking families, we update our tax code by limiting the Earned Income Tax Credit to working families who have lived in Massachusetts during the entire tax year. We broaden the state's room occupancy excise to cover short-term transient accommodations, and embrace the rise of the innovative room sharing economy."

Senator Michael J. Rodrigues, Politico

POLITICO

INFOGRAPHICS



Airbnb Tax in Massachusetts

The Department of Revenue estimates that this would deliver approximately \$16.7 million in additional annual revenue by 2018, the year when the new EITC match rate (28 percent) first would go into effect.

MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

ON

Public Education

@MA_Senate



UMass Tuition Retention

An Amendment to the FY16 Senate Budget

Summary



- 1 This change in state law allows UMass to keep all of the tuition dollars it receives rather than sending the funds back to the general fund.
- 2 The amendment allows for more predictable budgeting for UMass for the future and puts the system in line with public university systems across the country.
- 3 The UMass system received \$531.8M in state funding for FY2016, a \$20.6M increase over the previous year.

This amendment was adopted in the FY16 Senate budget



Senate President Stanley C. Rosenberg (D-Amherst)
@SenStan



The Senate Budget was passed on **May 28, 2015**



An initiative that took about **20 years** to become a reality

STATUS



Signed into Law

Currently, UMass keeps the tuition it receives from out-of-state students, but in-state tuition is directed back to the state. This results in UMass regularly raising fees, rather than tuition, since the campuses are allowed to keep the fees. This amendment allows UMass to be in line with other states in how the funding of public higher education is handled and will allow for more transparency in billing for students and their families.

RESPONSE



"We applaud the Legislature for approving a practical and straightforward approach to simplifying the billing process that will provide clarity for students and their families and give the University an important management tool."

- UMass spokesman Robert Connolly

"The rising cost of tuition and fees are pricing students out of attending college and UMass has a responsibility to keep costs down to ensure access for all students, regardless of socio-economic background."

- Senate President Stanley C. Rosenberg



INFOGRAPHICS

MA Senate Adopts



UMass Tuition Retention in FY16 Budget

The RISE Act

S.2220 An Act Enhancing Reform, Innovation, and Success in Education

Summary



- 1 Public school reform for 100% of students, at the same cost as the ballot initiative, which addresses only 4-8% of students.
- 2 Transparency on finances, contracts, policies, and board meetings for charter schools.
- 3 Eliminates cap on charter schools for students at risk, increases net spending on charters in underperforming districts.
- 4 Puts all children in lottery for charter admission.
- 5 Creates 10,000 additional charter school students.

This bill was the product of collaborative effort between Senators



Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz
@SoniaChangDiaz

Chair of the Joint Committee on Education



Senator Patricia D. Jehlen
@SenJehlen

Chair, Joint Committee on Elder Affairs
Vice Chair, Joint Committee on Education



Senator Karen E. Spilka
@KarenSpilka

Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means



Senator Daniel A. Wolf
@SenatorDanWolf

Chair, Joint Committee on Labor and Workforce Development



This Legislation was passed on
April 7, 2016

STATUS



Sent to House

The Senate also adopted an amendment to increase data reporting by DESE to include English language learners and special education students. Amendments were also adopted to encourage the usage of teachers' aides or other paraprofessionals to provide educational support, including but not limited to tutoring, instructional assistance and parental involvement activities in priority and underperforming schools.

RESPONSE



"For the sake of all students, [the charter school ballot question] is a political battle that ought to be avoided. The Senate has passed the RISE Act (officially, An Act in Reform, Innovation and Success in Education) that addresses what should be everybody's goal: raising the quality of education in both charter and public schools, not choosing one at the expense of the other."

- *Masslive, Editorial*

"The RISE Act includes some of the most powerful levers for closing the achievement gap the Commonwealth has seen in over a decade. We'll continue to fight for the needs of 100% of students-- the 96% in district schools, the 4% in charters, and no matter what waiting list you're on."

- *Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz*



INFOGRAPHICS

LIFTS THE CAP

For lowest-performing districts



Creating tens of thousands of new seats in innovative classrooms

@MA_Senate

#RISEact

529 College Savings Plan



529 College Savings Plan State Tax Deductions Increase

Summary

- 1 529 savings plans help families save for college, with earnings or contributions not subject to federal taxes.
- 2 Under the new plan, individuals may deduct up to \$1,000, and married couples may deduct up to \$2,000.
- 3 Massachusetts now joins 33 other states and Washington, DC in allowing deductions in state taxes for 529 plans.

This measure was sponsored by Senator Eileen M. Donoghue (D-Lowell)



Senator Eileen M. Donoghue
@EileenDonoghue

Chair, Joint Committee on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies

Vice Chair, Joint Committee on Higher Education



This bill was passed on **July 14, 2016**



This measure was included in the Economic Development Bill

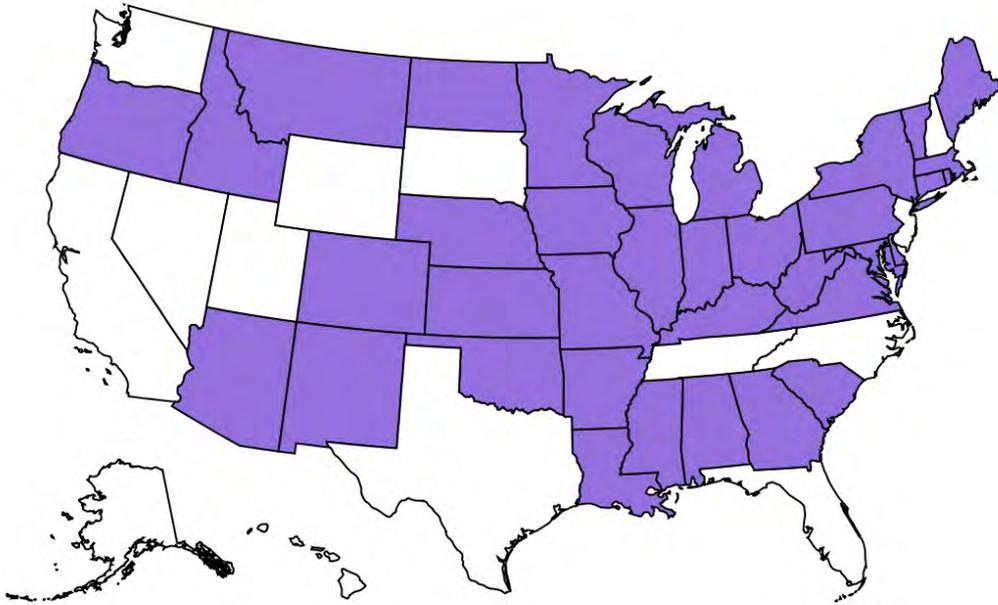
STATUS



Signed into Law

INFOGRAPHICS

States that offer a deduction on state taxes for 529 college savings plan



INFOGRAPHICS

Massachusetts



529 Plan

- 1 Helps families save for college
- 2 Allows State tax deductions of up to \$1,000 for individuals and \$2,000 for married couples
- 3 Massachusetts now joins 33 other states and Washington D.C in allowing deductions in state taxes for 529 plan.

MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

On

Public Health

@MA_Senate



The Opioid Bill



MA Senate Passes | **Bill to Prevent Opioid Addiction**

S. 2022 An Act Relative to Substance Use Prevention

Summary

- 1 The legislation focuses on prevention and reducing the number of opiate pills in circulation by working with doctors, insurance companies, pharmaceutical companies, and pharmacists.
- 2 The bill provides for verbal screenings by a qualified and properly trained professional to ask middle and high school children about their attitudes and behaviors about drugs and alcohol to prevent further misuse of drugs and refer at-risk teens to treatment to stem the tide of the crisis.
- 3 The bill also establishes a patients right to fill their prescription for a schedule II opiate, the highest risk classification under DEA rules, in a quantity less than the full prescribed amount. This would further reduce the quantity of unused and excess drugs.

This bill was the product of collaborative effort between Senators



Senator Jennifer L. Flanagan
@JenFlanaganMA
Chair, Special Senate Committee on Opioid Addiction Prevention, Treatment and Recovery Options



Senator John F. Keenan
@SenJohnFKeenan
Chair, Senate Committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures and State Assets



Senator Karen E. Spilka
@KarenSpilka
Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means



This Legislation was passed on **October 5, 2015**

STATUS



Signed into Law

The Senate Special Opioid Committee first convened in January 2014 in response to the substantial increase in reported overdose emergencies and fatalities throughout communities in Massachusetts. The bill addresses many of the unmet needs in combating the opioid crisis throughout the Commonwealth.

RESPONSE



Sentinel & Enterprise

"That the Senate approved S.2022 unanimously is a clear signal Beacon Hill understands the urgency of ending the epidemic. There is not a political district in the commonwealth that has not been touched by this scourge."

Sentinel & Enterprise, Editorial

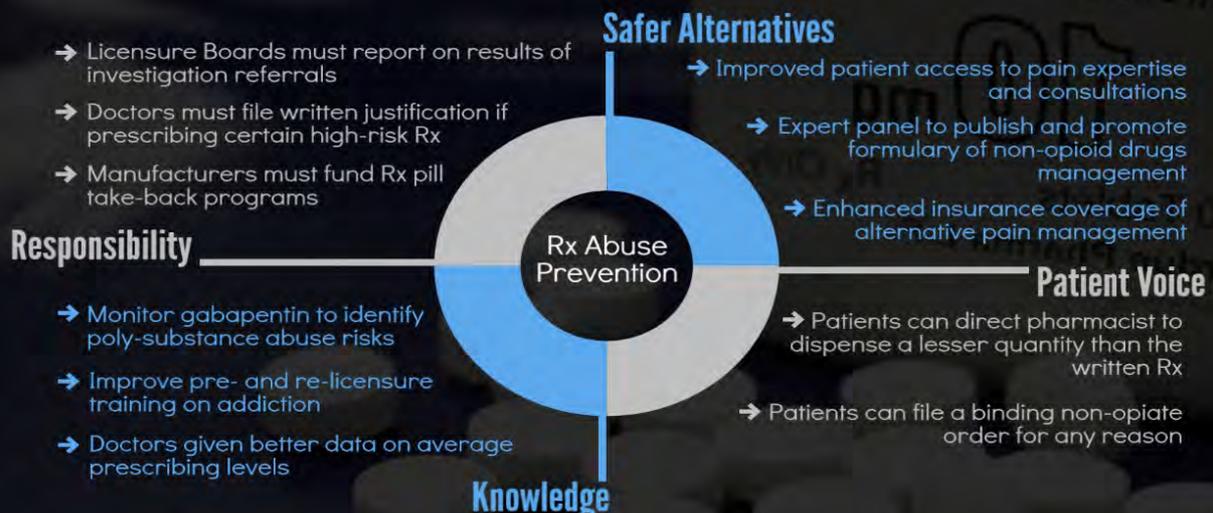
"We must offer assistance to students in our public schools while they are young, able to change their behaviors, and are not yet mentally and physically dependent on drugs and alcohol. Kids who need this kind of help will appreciate being asked honestly about their needs, and schools will be given a valuable tool in this battle against addiction."

- Senator Jennifer L. Flanagan



INFOGRAPHICS

MA Senate Opioid Bill



@SenJohnFKeenan



@JenFlanaganMA

Elder Abuse Prevention



S.2466 An Act Relative to the Commonwealth's Direct-Care Workforce for Elderly and Disabled Consumers

Summary

- 1 Stops anyone found to have abused an elder from working with elders, children, and persons with disabilities or mental illness.
- 2 Fixes the regulation gap that lets workers at Assisted Living Residences go unregistered when they abuse an elder.
- 3 Any person who has been suspended as a result of abusing an elder cannot advertise themselves for work as a caregiver and if a suspended person does, they will be subject to a fine of not less than \$5,000.

The bill was sponsored by Senator Patricia D. Jehlen (D-Somerville)



Senator Patricia D. Jehlen
@SenJehlen

Chair, Joint Committee on Elder Affairs



This Legislation was passed on
July 28, 2016



Passed Unanimously

STATUS



Sent to House

The Massachusetts Office of Elder Affairs recorded nearly 25,000 cases of elder abuse last year. Workers who abuse elders are placed in a registry and suspended from continuing to work with elders, but some workers slip through the cracks.

RESPONSE

**WICKED
LOCAL**[®]

“Senator Jehlen’s quick work in getting this issue in front of lawmakers deserves praise.”

— *Al Norman, executive director of Mass Home Care Association.*

"If a nursing assistant or other worker in an assisted living facility were to abuse a patient, there would be nothing to prevent that person from continuing to work in that industry. The bill would give the DPH the ability to put it in the record if a caregiver abuses a patient"

— *Senator Patricia Jehlen*



INFOGRAPHICS

The MA Senate **PASSES** The Elder Abuse Prevention Bill

S.2466

The Massachusetts Office of Elder Affairs recorded nearly 25,000 cases of elder abuse last year. Workers who abuse elders are placed in a registry and suspended from continuing to work with elders. But some workers slip through the cracks.



Tanning Age Restriction



S.1994 An Act Further Regulating Tanning Facilities

Summary

- 1 No person under 18 years of age shall use a tanning device.
- 2 No tanning facility shall employ as an operator a person under 18 years of age or permit any other employee of the tanning facility who is under 18 years of age to operate a tanning device.
- 3 According to Boston's Dana Farber Cancer Institute, there are 10 to 20 new cases of melanoma each week. Nationwide there are 65,000 new cases and 9,000 deaths each year, which results in \$1.6 billion in health care costs.

The bill was sponsored by Senator James E. Timilty (D-Walpole)



Senator James E. Timilty
@SenJimTimilty

Chair, Joint Committee on Public Service

Chair, Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security



This Legislation was passed on
September 24, 2015



Passed Unanimously

STATUS



Signed into Law

Until now, Massachusetts law had prohibited anyone under 14 from using a tanning device without being accompanied by a parent or guardian. Anyone age 14 to 17 was allowed to use a tanning device with a parent or guardian's consent.

RESPONSE



"A number of prominent Massachusetts organizations, like Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, the Professional Firefighters of Massachusetts, and the Massachusetts Public Health Association, backed the proposal."

- *Boston Magazine*

"Today's signing of legislation to limit minors' use of tanning beds is the culmination of 10 years of work to help protect the children of the Commonwealth from a known carcinogen. The hope is that this new law will help diminish the prevalence of skin cancer in young people."

- *Senator James Timilty, Masslive*



INFOGRAPHICS



Omnibus Tobacco Bill



S. 2234 An Act to Protect Youth from the Health Risks of Tobacco and Nicotine Addiction

Summary

- 1 Prohibits the sale of all tobacco and nicotine delivery products to individuals under the age of 21. This bill seeks to reduce tobacco use and nicotine addiction among youth.
- 2 Prevents teenagers from starting to smoke by removing sources of tobacco and nicotine delivery products from their reach.
- 3 Responsibly regulates nicotine delivery products such as e-cigarettes by prohibiting their use at schools, including vocational schools and technical institutes, and in any workplace.

The bill was sponsored by Senator Jason M. Lewis (D- Winchester)



Senator Jason M. Lewis
@SenJasonLewis

Chair, Joint Committee on Public Health



Senator Harriette L. Chandler
@Sen_Chandler

The Senate Majority Leader



This Legislation was passed on
April 28, 2016

STATUS



Sent to House

Tobacco and nicotine use remains the leading cause of preventable illness and premature death in Massachusetts, requiring the Commonwealth and our residents to spend more than \$4 billion in healthcare-related costs each year. Smoking practices begin at a young age; a 2015 report from the Institute of Medicine found that 9 out of 10 daily smokers first tried a cigarette before age 19.

The Omnibus Tobacco Bill Also:

- Requires child-resistant packaging for e-cigarettes.
- Prohibits tobacco vending machines.
- Prohibits the sale of all tobacco and nicotine delivery products in pharmacies and other healthcare institutions.
- Grants the Department of Public Health the authority to regulate new, emerging tobacco and nicotine delivery products.
- Requires the Center for Health Information and Analysis to study the current tobacco cessation benefits offered by commercial insurers, MassHealth, and the Government Insurance Commission to determine how these benefit levels compare to CDC guidelines and best practices.

INFOGRAPHICS



achieved a 48% reduction in youth tobacco use after becoming the first community in MA to raise the MLSA to 21

1

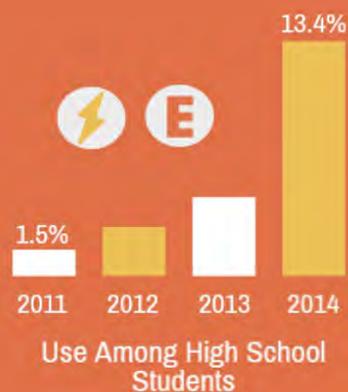
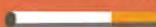
Raise minimum legal sales age from 18 to 21

for all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes. This strategy has been proven to be very effective in keeping tobacco products out of high school social networks

2

Regulate E-Cigarettes

Implement responsible regulation of the sale and use of e-cigarettes by prohibiting the use on school grounds and other places where smoking is not permitted like restaurants and workplaces



@Ma_Senate

@SenJasonLewis

MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

On

Social Justice

@MA_Senate



Transgender Rights Bill

S.2407 An Act relative to Transgender Anti-Discrimination

Summary

- 1 This bill provides equal access to public places for every resident of the Commonwealth, regardless of gender identity. Public accommodations include but are not limited to restaurants, nursing homes, coffee shops, grocery stores, and sports arenas.
- 2 This bill builds on the Transgender Equal Rights Bill, passed in 2011, which prohibited discrimination on the basis of gender identity in housing, education, employment and credit. Where the final bill in 2011 did not include public accommodations protections, this legislation completes a near decade of advocacy around full inclusion of transgender residents in communities across the Commonwealth.
- 3 More than 200 businesses across the Commonwealth and members of all five New England sports teams came out in support of this bill as central to promoting equal access rights for everyone in Massachusetts.



The bill passed in its original form with a 33-4 vote, all but one amendment was rejected



Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz

@SoniaChangDiaz

Chair of the Joint Committee on Education



Senator Bruce E. Tarr

@SenBruceTarr

Senate Minority Leader
Conference Committee Member



Senator William N. Brownsberger

@WBrownsberger

Chair, Joint Committee on the Judiciary



This legislation was passed on
May 12, 2016

STATUS



Signed into Law

14 cities and towns in Massachusetts and over 200 cities and towns across the country have these protections in place. Massachusetts has become the 18th state in the country to offer public accommodations protections for transgender residents.

RESPONSE

**The
Boston
Globe**

"Advocates for the Senate bill make some valid points: Since public accommodation is a civil rights issue, any delay in its implementation is unnecessary. The bill does not require the creation of special bathrooms or locker rooms, only that transgender people be allowed access based on their gender identity."

Boston Globe, Editorial

"By passing legislation that will ensure that transgender men and women are protected against unwarranted discrimination in public, Massachusetts continues to make strides on LGBTQ issues."

*Sylvain Bruni, President of Boston Pride
- Advocate*

A

INFOGRAPHICS

**MASSACHUSETTS
SENATE**

PASSES

Transgender Anti-discrimination
Law - S.735

@MA_Senate



#TransBillMA

Lipodystrophy Bill

Bill S.2137 An Act Relative to HIV-Associated Lipodystrophy Syndrome Treatment

Summary

- 1 This bill improves the lives of HIV positive residents who have been afflicted with the debilitating condition of lipodystrophy, a serious side effect from HIV medication.
- 2 Lipodystrophy is a condition that results from side effects from HIV medication, which causes abnormal fat accumulation around the head and neck or excessive fat loss in the face and limbs.
- 3 This bill provides insurance coverage for individuals who have been afflicted with a serious side effect from HIV medication.



The Lipodystrophy bill was sponsored by Senator Mark C. Montigny (D-New Bedford)



Senator Mark C. Montigny
Chair, Joint Committee on Rules

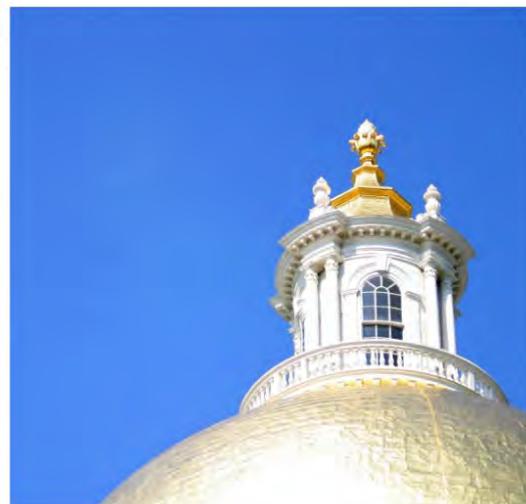


The legislation was passed on
February 25, 2016



Passed Unanimously

STATUS



Signed into Law

Fat accumulations from lipodystrophy can cause serious head and neck pain, inability to sleep, posture issues, and result in a poor quality of life. Excessive fat loss can result in “facial wasting” and serve as a Scarlet Letter for people with HIV. This bill provides insurance coverage for individuals who have been afflicted with lipodystrophy.

RESPONSE

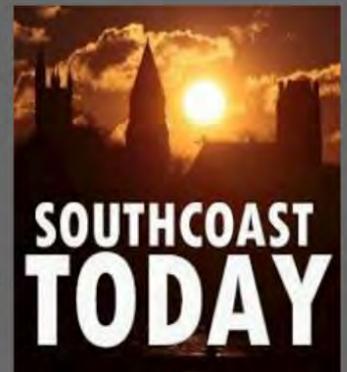


"This bill provides insurance coverage for individuals who have been afflicted with a serious side effect from HIV medication. Insurance companies, without this legislation, will continue to deny coverage based on nonsense claims that treatment for lipodystrophy is a so called 'cosmetic' procedure."

- Senator Mark C. Montigny

"This historic bill continues Massachusetts' leadership ensuring sound and compassionate healthcare for people with HIV."

-Bennett Klein, AIDS Law Project director at GLAD, GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders



INFOGRAPHICS

A background image of a laboratory with various glassware and equipment, overlaid with text.

MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

UNANIMOUSLY PASSES
Lipodystrophy Bill

@MA_Senate #MALipodystrophyBill

Credit Report



S.2425 An Act Regulating the Use of Credit Reports by Employers

Summary

- 1 To provide a measure of relief to Massachusetts job applicants, the Senate approved a bill to restrict the use of credit reports in hiring and promotions.
- 2 The bill provides exemptions for jobs that require credit checks under federal or state law, high-level positions at financial institutions, jobs that require national security clearance, and jobs with authority over funds of more than \$6,000.
- 3 In Massachusetts, it is currently legal for employers to conduct credit checks on job applicants and to use the results in employment decisions.

The bill was sponsored by Senator Michael J. Barrett (D-Lexington)



Senator Michael J. Barrett
@BarrettSenate

Chair, Senate Committee on Post Audit and Oversight



This Legislation was passed on
July 12, 2016



Passed Unanimously

STATUS



Sent to House

47% of employers nationally use credit checks to evaluate job applicants. Recent studies show credit reports are often riddled with errors. An eight-year study by the Federal Trade Commission found that 25% of consumers spotted mistakes in their records.

RESPONSE

Patch

**NEWS
ALERT**

"We don't have any research to show, any statistical correlation between what's in somebody's credit report and their job performance or their likelihood to commit fraud."

- Eric Rosenberg, Legislative Director for Transunion

"People see their credit reports dinged due to circumstances they couldn't reasonably foresee -- their spouse becomes ill, they get laid off, or they hit a combination of student debt and under-employment. All these things are regrettable, but none should stop them from getting back on their feet."

- Senator Michael J. Barrett



INFOGRAPHICS

Accuracy of Credit Reports

An eight-year study by the Federal Trade Commission found that 25% of consumers saw potentially significant errors in their own reports.



Saw Significant Errors

Yet

47%

of employers nationally use credit checks to evaluate job applicants

@Ma_Senate

S.2394

Veterans H.O.M.E Act

S.2325 An Act Relative to Housing, Operations, Military Service, and Enrichment

Summary

- 1 Expands on the commitment the Massachusetts Senate has made to our veterans, service members and their families by providing benefits and services.
- 2 Requires housing authorities to exclude amounts of disability compensation paid by the federal government to calculate the rent of a disabled veteran.
- 3 Gives eligible veterans a preference in housing for the elderly and persons with disabilities in all communities, not only just the community in which the veteran resides.
- 4 Provides a property tax exemption for the surviving spouse of any soldier, sailor, member of the National Guard or veteran who suffered an injury or illness which was the proximate cause of death during active duty service.



The bill was sponsored by **Senator Michael F. Rush (D-Quincy)**



Senator Michael F. Rush

@SenatorMikeRush

Chair, Joint Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs

Chair, Senate Committee on Personnel and Administration



The legislation was passed on
June 16, 2016



Passed Unanimously

STATUS



Signed into Law

Focusing on housing and long-term support, the passage of the Veterans HOME Act continues the strong reputation that Massachusetts has as a leader in understanding the sacrifice that military personnel and their families make not only while on active duty, but also after returning home.

Other provisions of this Act include:

- Expands the Public Service Scholarship to include children of any military or service person missing in action and children of prisoners of war.
- Protects the pay, seniority and accrued leave time for Commonwealth employees serving in the armed forces reserves.
- Allows cities and towns to appoint a veteran's agent for 3 year terms instead of the current 1 year term.
- Establishes the Office of Veterans Homes and Housing within the Department of Veterans Services to oversee the Soldiers Home in Chelsea and in Holyoke.
- Creates a post-deployment commission to study ways to improve services to veterans who have been deployed overseas.
- Adds veteran status as a protected class under the statute prohibiting discrimination in employment.

INFOGRAPHICS



VETERANS BENEFITS

Housing authorities to exclude amounts of disability compensation paid by the U.S. Government in making rent determinations. The language provides that in determining net income, amounts of disability compensation for disability occurring in connection with military service in excess of \$1,800 shall be excluded

H.O.M.E. Act

@SenatorMikeRush

S.2325

@Ma_Senate

MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

ON

Working Groups

@MA_Senate



The Tour



Commonwealth Conversations: Bringing Beacon Hill to Main Streets

Summary

- 1 The statewide tour of Senate districts was led by area Senators to visit residents, businesses, and interest groups to listen directly to their needs and concerns.
- 2 The goal of Commonwealth Conversations was to foster more civic engagement while helping each senator learn more about issues outside of their own districts.
- 3 Each member of the Senate committed to attending at least two of these sessions outside of their own region. Each day ended with a public town hall forum specific to that region.

The Commonwealth Conversations Tour was coordinated by Senator Michael Rodrigues (D-Westport)



Senator Michael J. Rodrigues
@SenRodrigues

Chair, Joint Committee on Revenue



Massachusetts Senate Announced the tour
January 29, 2015



All 40 Senators Participated

STATUS



Ongoing

"I am honored to play a role in organizing the Commonwealth Conversations Tour, and excited to engage with people from all corners of the state to learn more about the challenges and opportunities they are encountering. It is my hope that this tour will provide a platform from which the Senate can work collaboratively toward improving the lives of people throughout Massachusetts." - Senator Michael Rodrigues

RESPONSE

**The
Boston
Globe**

"The statewide bus tour is forcing senators to get out of their districts — and off Beacon Hill — to see what is needed around the state. And while the communities may be unfamiliar - the issues are not."

Akilah Johnson, The Boston Globe

"#SharedLeadership is all about creating an inclusive and open Senate that truly engages the people of the Commonwealth and includes them in the discussion. The CC Tour is #SharedLeadership in action. So come, pull up a chair, and take a seat at the table."

- BuzzFeed

BuzzFeed

INFOGRAPHICS

#MaConvos Twitter Town Hall

**Wednesday
June 17th**

**You Ask...
MA Senators
Answer!**

Brought to You via:
Periscope

What You Need to Know:

- 1. Visit MaLegislature.Gov/CC**
to learn about the Commonwealth Conversations Tour.
- 2. Tweet Using #MaConvos**
ask questions, give input, be heard!
- 3. Check out @Ma_Senate**
at 2pm, Senators will begin responding.
- 4. Look for your response**
as a Tweet or a live-video reply on Periscope.

Millennial Engagement



Senate President Appoints Senator Lesser to Launch Millennial Engagement Initiative

Summary

- 1 The initiative creates a dialogue with millennials across the Commonwealth about issues that matter most to them, including student debt, social media privacy and the new gig economy.
- 2 Focuses on the concerns of millennials, bringing their important perspectives and ideas into the conversation to influence outcomes.
- 3 Millennials are the generation born between the early 1980s and around 2000.

Senator Eric P. Lesser and Senator Ryan C. Fattman are spearheading the new Millennial Engagement Initiative for the Massachusetts Senate



Senator Eric P. Lesser
@EricLesser

Co-Chair, Millennial Engagement Initiative



Senator Ryan C. Fattman
@RyanFattman

Co-Chair, Millennial Engagement Initiative



Senator Michael J. Rodrigues
@SenRodrigues

Chair, Joint Committee on Revenue



Senator Barbara L'Italien
@teambarbara

Chair, Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government

STATUS



On-Going

RESPONSE



The
Herald-News

"The Millennial Engagement Initiative is a series of discussions across the Commonwealth that will allow the Massachusetts State Senate to better engage millennials, encouraging them to have their voices heard and to make an impact on shaping their futures."

Herald News, Senator Michael J. Rodrigues

"The initiative involves certain legislators traveling around the Commonwealth to meet with younger voters, and get their perspective on everything from student debt to social media and beyond. Rosenberg added that he hopes millennials will not only help identify problems, but also put forward solutions."

- CBS Boston



INFOGRAPHICS

MILLENNIALS 
have now surpassed
 **BABY BOOMERS** as the
LARGEST GENERATION

Housing Report



Report of the Special Senate Committee on Housing

Summary

- 1 The Committee decided to form an advisory group with experts in the field of housing, including representatives of real estate business groups, non-profit housing organizations, tenants and landlords' organizations, academia, and staff at the Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- 2 The group was divided into sub-committees to address specific issues, including foreclosures; gentrification; homelessness; preservation and rehabilitation; production; public housing; support services; and zoning. They were tasked with drafting recommendations for solutions to help move our Commonwealth forward.
- 3 This report contains 19 proposals, which will make meaningful progress in several areas of housing while setting the stage for longer term reforms.



Senator Linda Dorcena Forry

@ldforry

Chair, Joint Committee on Housing



Senator Harriette L. Chandler

@Sen_Chandler

Co-Chair, Joint Committee on Housing

Proposals

Foreclosure

- **Mortgage Debt Relief**

Exclude forgiven mortgage debt from taxable income to not be counted as part of gross income to minimize hardships for households already in distress.

Gentrification

- **Community Land Trust**

Create a seed grant and technical assistance program for Community Land Trusts to promote permanently affordable housing and sustainable home ownership.

- **Property Tax Relief and Municipal Right of First Refusal**

Create a property tax relief program that allows distressed homeowners to stay in their homes in exchange for a right of first refusal that the municipality can utilize in creative ways to create affordable housing or prevent tear-downs.

- **State Surplus Properties**

Allow the state to dispose of surplus land with easy access to transportation below market value to create affordable housing.

Proposals

Homelessness

- **Tenant-Landlord Guarantee Pilot Program**

Create the Tenant-Landlord Guarantee pilot program to reduce the time families spend in motels by encouraging landlords to adjust their screening criteria and rent to families facing housing barriers.

- **RAFT Expansion**

Broaden the eligibility for RAFT and allocate additional funding to allow all household types to access the benefits of this proven homelessness prevention program by creating an inclusive definition of family, including elders, unaccompanied youth, and people with disabilities who do not have children in the household.

Preservation/Rehabilitation

- **13A Preservation**

Allocate \$15 million in additional state low-income housing tax credits to ensure housing that could lose affordability restrictions remains affordable.

- **Distressed and Abandoned Property Fund**

Provide funding to the Attorney General's Abandoned Housing Initiative (AHI) Revolving Loan Fund to repair distressed and abandoned property to turn around these properties and make them suitable for new tenants.

Production

- **Multi-family Zoning**

Allow multi-family zoning as of right to address the housing shortage but also provide suitable housing for families.

- **Smart Growth Housing Trust Fund**

Create a funding mechanism for the Smart Growth Housing Trust Fund to ensure a revenue source is available to fund incentive and school cost payments to communities that welcome smart growth as promised by Chapter 40R by capturing existing revenues and setting them aside temporarily.

Public Housing

- **Offline Vacant Units**

Create and implement a resident apprenticeship program that puts low income residents back to work and allows smaller housing authorities to get vacant units back online.

- **Surplus Public Housing Authority Owned Land**

Allow for the development of local housing authorities (LHA) surplus land to be used for mixed income housing.

Support Services

- **Family Self-sufficiency Programs**

Increase support for asset building and financial stability programs that coordinate with stable housing and help low-income citizens of the Commonwealth achieve economic self-sufficiency.

- **Interagency Coordination**

Empower the Interagency Task Force to coordinate with government agencies to ensure consistency and reliability for people who need access to government assistance services.

Marijuana Report

Report of the Special Senate Committee on Marijuana

Summary

- 1 In February 2015, the Massachusetts Senate created the Special Senate Committee on Marijuana. The purpose of the Committee was to research and make policy recommendations in the event that Massachusetts were to legalize the adult recreational use and sale of marijuana.
- 2 In the report, the Committee recommended actions to address numerous policy issues that would arise if marijuana were to be legalized. The Committee remained neutral on the legalization question, and its report made only neutral policy recommendations.
- 3 After completing the extensive review of marijuana policy, the Committee members issued their report to share their overall perspective on this important issue with the Legislature and the public.



Special Senate Committee on Marijuana Members



Senator Jason M. Lewis (D-Winchester)
Chair of Special Committee on Marijuana
@SenJasonLewis



Senator Michael O. Moore (D-Millbury)
Vice-Chair of Special Committee on Marijuana
@SenMikeMoore



Senator Harriette L. Chandler (D-Worcester)
Senate Majority Leader
@Sen_Chandler



Senator Viriato M. deMacedo (R-Plymouth)
Ranking Minority, Senate Ways and Means
@VinnymdeMacedo



Senator Linda Dorcena Forry (D-Dorchester)
Chair, Joint Committee on Housing
@ldForry



Senator John F. Kennan (D-Quincy)
Chair, Senate Committee on Bonding,
Capital Expenditures and State Assets
@JohnFKeenan



Senator Michael J. Rodrigues
(D-Westport)
Chair, Joint Committee on Revenue
@SenRodrigues



Senator Richard J. Ross (R-Wrentham)
Special Senate Committee to Improve
Government
@SenRichardJRoss



Senator James T. Welch
(D-West Springfield)
Chair, Joint Committee on Health Care
Financing

Executive Summary

Massachusetts Ballot Question

In November 2016, Massachusetts voters will consider an initiative petition to approve the recreational use and sale of marijuana in the Commonwealth.

Current Marijuana Use in Massachusetts

An estimated 885,000 Massachusetts residents used marijuana in the past year, including almost 400,000 children and young adults under the age of 25. They consumed an estimated 85 metric tons of marijuana. Approximately 1 in 4 high school students used marijuana in the past year.

Health Impacts on Marijuana Use

Recreational marijuana use can cause short-term impacts that may include increased heart rate and blood pressure, delayed reaction time, reduced motor control, and impaired decision making. Longer-term impacts of adult marijuana use are less well understood.

Public Safety and Criminal Justice Impacts of Marijuana Use

The legalization of marijuana creates some different public safety concerns. State health officials have to assume responsibility for ensuring that products do not contain unsafe levels of pesticides, mold, or other contaminants. Businesses and law enforcement have to deal with security issues, including theft of product and the industry's high use of cash for many transactions.

Policy Goals when Considering Marijuana Legalization

- Prevent marijuana use by youth under 21 years old
- Minimize abuse misuse and addiction
- Minimize black market and criminal activity
- Ensure a well-regulated marketplace that minimizes commercialization
- Generate sufficient tax revenue to meet necessary public costs

Policy Choices when Implementing a Regulatory Framework for Legalized Marijuana

Even with as much careful preparation and planning as possible, it will still be necessary to build in flexibility since changes in laws and regulations governing marijuana will almost certainly be necessary as the market develops and new issues are identified.

Kids First

"Kids First" A Multi-Year Initiative to Identify and Support Innovative Strategies to Invest in Massachusetts' Children

Summary

- 1 "Kids First" will take a comprehensive and interdisciplinary look at a wide variety of policy areas which relate to supporting children, such as education, nutrition, public health, housing, and workforce development.
- 2 The first phase of the initiative will focus on early childhood development from prenatal through the fourth grade. The group of nine senators is led by Senator DiDomenico, and will seek out input on best-in-the-nation practices to support children, and will make budget and policy recommendations to support their findings.
- 3 Kids First will not only explore and identify the best practices and investments it can make for our children today, it will also pinpoint the long-term actions that will put generations of children on the path to a productive adulthood.



The Kids First Initiative is led by Senator Sal N. DiDomenico (D-Everett)



Senator Sal N. DiDomenico
@SalDiDomenico

Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means



Senator Jennifer L. Flanagan
@JenFlanaganMA

Chair, Special Senate Committee on Opioid Addiction Prevention, Treatment and Recovery Options



Senator James T. Welch
@Sen_Jim_Welch

Chair, Joint Committee on Health Care Financing



Senator Richard J. Ross
@SenRichardJRoss

Assistant Senate Minority Leader

STATUS



On-Going

Massachusetts has long been a leader in education, public health, and innovation. However, when it comes to ensuring that all our children have a chance to succeed, there is still work that remains to be done and Kids First will work towards meeting these goals.

RESPONSE



"The group will collaborate with experts in many fields that will be addressed in this initiative to develop a comprehensive, long-term strategy that will provide all Massachusetts children with the tools they need to be successful now and in the future."

Allston, Wicked Local

"Senate launches initiative to improve lives of children looking at everything from education and nutrition to public health, housing and workforce development for ways to help the state's youngest residents."

Associated Press, The Washington Times



INFOGRAPHICS



 @SalDiDomenico
#Kids1stMa

Kids First will:

- Take an inter-disciplinary look at policy areas which relate to supporting children, such as education, nutrition, public health, housing, and workforce development.
- Consist of a group of nine senators, led by Senator Sal DiDomenico, researching best-in-the-nation practices.
- Will focus on childhood development from prenatal through the fourth grade.
- Make budget and policy recommendations based on their findings to provide a blueprint for smart long term investments.

WorkFirst

The WorkFirst Initiative will reform welfare to work and job training programs and create more opportunities for people to move from public assistance to the workforce

Summary

- 1 First, the initiative will look at our current workfare and job training system. It will determine what has been successful and what needs to be improved or eliminated without jeopardizing those who truly need a safety net to survive.
- 2 Secondly, the initiative will examine successful programs in other states that have moved people from public assistance or unemployment back into the workplace.
- 3 Finally, the initiative will focus on closing the skills gap and working with the private sector, community colleges, and universities to develop pipelines of workers for industries identified with the largest needs for skilled workers.



The WorkFirst Initiative is led by Senate President Pro Tempore Marc Pacheco (D-Taunton)



Senator Marc R. Pacheco
@MarcRPacheco

Chair, Senate Committee on Global Warming and Climate Change



Senator Kenneth J. Donnelly
@SenKenDonnelly

Vice Chair, Joint Committee on Election Laws



Senator Kathleen O'Connor Ives
@KOConnorIves

Chair, Joint Committee on Community Development and Small Businesses



Senator Donald F. Humason, Jr.
@SenDonHumason

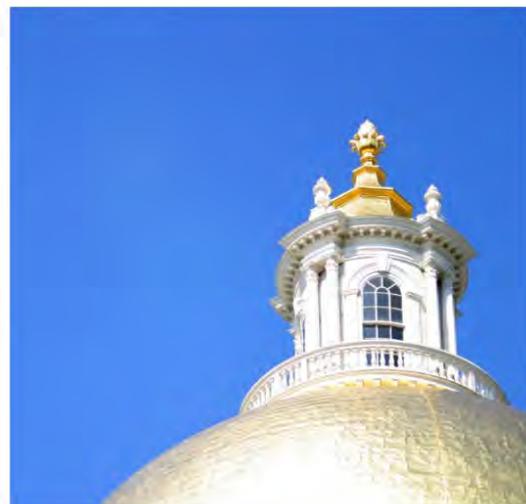
Senate Minority Whip



Senator Ryan C. Fattman
@RyanFattman

Assistant Senate Minority Whip

STATUS



On-Going

RESPONSE

**WICKED
LOCAL**[®]

"A major component of the Senate's plan to boost the state's economy centers around an effort to move more people off the welfare rolls and into the workforce."

—
-Taunton Daily Gazette

"The goal should be nothing less than restoring Massachusetts to the forefront of successful welfare reform, as it was 20 years ago."

—
- Daily Hampshire Gazette

G

INFOGRAPHICS

— **Lifting ALL Families!** —



WorkFirst Initiative

This budget prioritizes investments to connect long term unemployed & underemployed workers with the skills they need to reenter the workforce.

Massachusetts FY16 Budget

Children, Families, and Persons with Disabilities

S.2050

An Act relative to the re-homing of children

- Summary**
- Prohibits the practice of privately transferring adopted children to new homes.
 - Protects children from adoption outside of the legal system.
 - Requires adoption agencies to disclose to prospective adoptive parents any known physical or behavioral health issues of the child and the child's birth family, and to provide post-adoption services to adoptive parents and adopted children.

STATUS



SENT TO HOUSE

S.2166

Amplify hiring of persons with disabilities

- Summary**
- Requires the Supplier Diversity Office to develop and implement standard to recruit qualified job applicants with disabilities.
 - Mandates that all state employees involved with hiring personnel receive education and training regarding the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
 - Aims to decrease unemployment among qualified individuals with disabilities.

STATUS



SENT TO HOUSE

Consumer Protection & Professional Licensure

S.2194

Regulate unsolicited loans

- Summary**
- Protects customers from loan instruments, such as checks and money orders, that were not solicited by the customer.
 - Prevents and protects customers from incurring debt from these unsolicited loan instruments

STATUS



SENT TO HOUSE

S.2323

Limit check-cashing fees

- Summary**
- Limits the maximum fee charged for check cashing services and money order purchases to a reasonable percentage of the total check value
 - Sets the rate for cashing government checks at 1.5% of the check value
 - Will ensure that working individuals can retain more of their hard-earned wages

STATUS



SENT TO HOUSE

S.2050

Innovative Communities

- Summary**
- Establishes a new Innovative Communities Office to facilitate communication between tech startups and municipalities looking for innovative tech solutions for their communities.
 - Introduces the idea of Innovative Communities, municipalities in the Commonwealth that choose to partner with tech startups through the new office.
 - Calls for the development of a program to educate startups on how to market and sell products to local governments, and to educate municipalities on available technology that could aid their government.

STATUS



SENT TO HOUSE

Education

S.2061

Promote quality physical education

- Summary**
- Updates statewide physical education requirements to include charter schools.
 - Redefines physical education to also encompass fitness, nutrition, and wellness.
 - Requires that physical education be age-appropriate and evidence-based.
 - Sets minimum weekly time requirements.

STATUS



SENT TO HOUSE

S.2062

Healthy youth: sex education

- Summary**
- Requires school districts, and both traditional public and charter schools, to teach medically accurate, age-appropriate sex education.
 - Allows for parents or guardians to withdraw their child from a sex education program by requiring schools to create a written policy regarding parental notification of sex education programs.

STATUS



SENT TO HOUSE

S.2395

Update English language learning laws

- Summary**
- Requires that English language learners be offered a Language Acquisition Program in traditional public and charter schools.
 - Students will participate in dual language or transitional bilingual instruction which will allow learners to become proficient in English.

STATUS



SENT TO HOUSE

S.2109

Paint stewardship program

- Summary**
- Requires the producers of retail architectural paint to submit a plan for the establishment of a paint stewardship program to dispose of extra paint.
 - Would add the minimal cost of this program onto the cost of paint.
 - Estimated to save municipalities \$12 million annually in waste disposal expenditures.

STATUS



SENT TO HOUSE

S.2121

Emissions benchmarks update

- Summary**
- Updates statewide greenhouse gas emissions benchmarks by calling for 2030 emissions limits to be between 35-45% below 1990 emissions levels, and for 2040 emissions limits to be between 55-65% below 1990 emissions levels.
 - Keeps Massachusetts on track to meet the 2050 statewide greenhouse gas emissions limits, put in place by the Global Warming Solutions Act.

STATUS



SENT TO HOUSE

S.2389

Reduce solid waste and promote recycling

- Summary**
- Requires the DEP to set performance standards for municipal solid waste recycling, specifically household trash and debris generated by construction and demolition.
 - Relieves pressure on landfills and incinerators, and encourages policies that protect our environment.

STATUS



SENT TO HOUSE

Higher Education

S.2195

Uniform financial aid information

- Summary**
- Requires all public and private institutions of higher education to provide accepted applicants with a financial aid shopping sheet.
 - This sheet was developed by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau and the United States Department of Education

STATUS



SENT TO HOUSE

S.2393

Higher education opportunities for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities

- Summary**
- Requires public higher education institutions to offer inclusive opportunities to support individuals with intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, or other developmental disabilities.
 - Allows such individuals who are seeking to gain academic, career, technical, and independent living skills the ability to enroll in or audit credit and noncredit courses.
 - Establishes a discretionary grant program to provide funds to school districts and public state institutions to offer inclusive concurrent enrollment program options for such individuals.

STATUS



SENT TO HOUSE

S.2433

Medical placement of inmates

- Summary**
- Creates a process for the Department of Corrections to place terminally ill and permanently incapacitated prisoners, who are no longer a threat to public safety, in healthcare settings separate from state prisons.
 - Allows eligible inmates to receive end-of-life care in nursing homes or hospice care.
 - Brings Massachusetts in line with many other states that use similar medical placement systems.

STATUS



SENT TO HOUSE

S.795

An Act Relative to Adjusting the Credit for Nonpayment of Fines

- Summary**
- Updates the current credit of \$30 per day for someone incarcerated for non-payment of fines to \$60 per day.
 - This will allow offenders to spend less time in jail and pay off their fines more quickly. The credit was last updated in 1987 when it went from \$3 to \$30 per day.

STATUS



SENT TO HOUSE

S.2176

Update larceny thresholds

- Summary**
- Raises threshold of felony larceny and other property charges from \$250 to \$1,500.
 - Brings Massachusetts in line with other states.
 - Has not been updated since 1987.

STATUS



SENT TO HOUSE

S.2369

Prevent animal suffering and death

- Summary**
- Prohibits the confining of an animal in a motor vehicle in conditions that threaten the animal's health due to extreme heat or cold.
 - Allows officials to enter a vehicle for the purpose of rescuing an animal after making an effort to locate the owner.

STATUS



Signed Into Law

Labor & Workforce Development

S.2033

Improve worker's compensation disfigurement benefits

- Summary**
- Changes compensation for bodily disfigurement to a floating calculation equal to 22.5 times the weekly wage in the Commonwealth.
 - Further allows such compensation for purely scar-based disfigurement on any part of the body. Current law only accounts for hands, feet, and neck.

STATUS



SENT TO HOUSE

S.2063

Social media privacy protection

- Summary**
- Prohibits employers from requesting and requiring employees or job applicants to disclose personal social media usernames or passwords.
 - Forbids schools from requiring students or applicants to disclose personal social media usernames or passwords.

STATUS



SENT TO HOUSE

S.2416

Prevent wage theft

- Summary**
- Holds companies liable if they contract with a subcontractor who withholds wages.
 - Company could also be held accountable for fees and fines if company knew or should have known about the wage theft violation by the subcontractor.

STATUS



SENT TO HOUSE

S.2432

Require insurance coverage of 30-day addiction treatment

- Summary**
- Expands coverage for full spectrum addiction treatment services from 14 days to 30 days.
 - Establishes that insurance carriers may initiate review procedures on day 14, but these procedures may not be used to deny a patient the 30 days of treatments or further evaluations.

STATUS



SENT TO HOUSE

S.2375

Protect abandoned animals in vacant properties

- Summary**
- Requires that the lessor or owner of a vacated property must inspect the property for the presence of abandoned animals within 3 days after it has been vacated.
 - If an animal is found, the lessor or owner must immediately notify an animal control officer or police officer.

STATUS



SENT TO HOUSE

S.2390

Protect puppies and kittens

- Summary**
- Prohibits the sale of puppies and kittens younger than eight weeks old, increasing the likelihood they will grow up healthy.
 - Outlines process for veterinarians to declare animals "unfit for purchase."
 - Gives remedy to pet owners who unknowingly purchase a sick pet that requires extensive medical care.

STATUS



SENT TO HOUSE

S.2408

Right to Clotheslines

- Summary**
- Prohibits the barring of an installation and use of clothesline or charging a fee for such installation or use.

STATUS



SENT TO HOUSE

S.2410

Modernize Municipal Finance and Government

- Summary**
- Eliminates or updates obsolete laws that no longer serve a meaningful purpose, including the repeal of county government finance reporting requirements and changes to the civil motor vehicle infraction law to allow cities and towns to issue citations electronically.
 - Promotes local autonomy for cities and towns, allowing for more control over certain funding decisions and local regulations.
 - Takes steps to provide municipalities with greater flexibility, including a study on double utility poles, changes to procurement laws to simplify, clarify and increase thresholds for construction contracts and updates to the way municipalities use parking revenues, to allow for use on a wide range of transportation-related issues.

STATUS



Signed Into Law

Public Health

S.2269

Protect youth from tobacco and nicotine addiction, including raising age to 21 and including e-cigarettes

- Summary**
- Raises the legal age to purchase tobacco and other nicotine products to 21.
 - Prohibits the use of e-cigarettes on school grounds, and anywhere else where smoking is prohibited.
 - Prohibits the sale of tobacco in pharmacies.
 - Currently more than 100 cities and towns in Massachusetts prohibit tobacco sales to anyone under 21.

STATUS



SENT TO HOUSE

Public Safety

S.2216

Increase use of sheriff's community corrections and diversion programs for pre-trial detainees

- Summary**
- Allows corrections officials to place criminal defendants or pre-trial detainees in a community corrections program.

STATUS



SENT TO HOUSE

S.1494

Increase eligibility for local-option senior property tax deferral

- Summary**
- Offers property tax relief to homeowners 65 or older by allowing more seniors to qualify for the tax deferral program.
 - Increases qualifying income for seniors to \$80,000.

STATUS



SENT TO HOUSE

S.2110

Hands-free driving

- Summary**
- Bans the use of handheld cell phones when driving, in an effort to keep our roads safer.

STATUS



SENT TO HOUSE



The Massachusetts State Senate

2015-2016

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Senate Minority Leader Bruce E. Tarr (R-Gloucester)

Senator Michael J. Barrett (D-Lexington)

Senator Joseph A. Boncore (D-Winthrop)

Senator Michael D. Brady (D-Brockton)

Senator William N. Brownsberger (D-Belmont)

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Senator James T. Welch (D-West Springfield)

Senator Daniel A. Wolf (D-Harwich)



In Memory of Senator Thomas P. Kennedy



August 15, 1951-June 28, 2015 - Senate: 2008-2015

MASSACHUSETTS SENATE



SESSION REPORT

189th General Court