



*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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**Legislature Passes Balanced Budget; Targets Local Aid,  
Education and Opioid Epidemic**

*Support Communities, Strengthens Workforce, and Protects Most Vulnerable Residents*

(BOSTON) – **Representative Stephen Kulik (D-Worthington)** joined his colleagues in the Legislature to enact a \$41.88 billion Massachusetts state budget for FY19.

The budget features no new taxes or fees and directs a \$367 million deposit into the Stabilization Fund to ensure our state’s fiscal health and protect Massachusetts’ future. It also prioritizes our cities and towns, education and those most in need of help.

“This budget demonstrates a commitment to our constituents and is a testament to the fiscal strength of our Commonwealth,” said **Senate President Harriette L. Chandler (D-Worcester)**. “With this funding we are supporting our children’s education, the transit systems in our cities and towns, and underserved youth and families across Massachusetts.”

“This is a fiscally-sound budget that addresses our key priorities,” said **Speaker DeLeo, (D – Winthrop)**. “I am particularly proud of our investments in early education and care, the stabilization fund, criminal justice bill and our decision to lift the cap on benefits for children. I congratulate Chairman Sanchez and my colleagues in the Legislature for working together on this important legislation.”

“It was an honor to serve on the FY19 budget conference committee with Chairman Sanchez, Representative Smola, and the Senate conferees,” said **Representative Stephen Kulik (D-Worthington), Vice Chair of the House Committee on Ways & Means**. “I am proud that the final conference committee budget allocates record levels of funding for addressing the opioid crisis, improving education and local aid, and ensuring that environmental agencies have

adequate resources to do the important work of protecting our environment. The Department of Environmental Protection is funded at over \$29 million. Additionally, there were strong investments made in some of our most important agricultural programs, including an increase in the Dairy Farm Tax Credit from \$4 million to \$6 million annually, \$4 million in funding for the Healthy Incentives Program, and an initial capitalization of \$100,000 for the Massachusetts Food Trust. This conference committee budget is balanced, fiscally responsible, and reflects the priorities of the citizens of the Commonwealth."

"This budget reflects our ongoing commitment to the people of the Commonwealth, including our children, working families and the most vulnerable, while also maintaining fiscal responsibility," stated **Senator Karen E. Spilka, Chair of the Senate Ways & Means Committee (D-Ashland)**. "We take important steps towards supporting families through the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), expanding access to the economy through the creation of a pilot program to promote employment in state contracts with persons with disabilities, and protecting unaccompanied immigrant youth. We also honor our responsibility to be diligent fiscal stewards through substantial deposits to the Stabilization Fund and the creation of a tax expenditure review commission to ensure our tax payers are receiving worthwhile returns on their investments. I am most proud, however, of our record investment in K-12 education, which is the foundation of our shared success."

"Together, the House and Senate have passed a budget that invests in programs that make a difference in people's lives on a daily basis," said **Representative Jeffrey Sánchez, Chair of the House Committee on Ways & Means (D-Jamaica Plain)**. "From healthcare and housing to re-entry programs and education, this is a budget that moves Massachusetts forward. It builds on our strengths so the economy grows for the benefit of all our residents, no matter where they are in their lives. I'm grateful to Speaker DeLeo, my Senate counterpart Chair Karen Spilka, and to all House members for the opportunity to work with them in crafting this conference committee budget."

"This budget includes significant investments in our communities and in education," said **Representative Todd Smola (R-Springfield)**. "We have also committed to building up our reserves by putting additional money into our stabilization fund, which will help improve our financial position going forward. This is a solid budget that is the result of a careful negotiation with a focus on our cities and towns and the people of the Commonwealth."

In recognition of the state's strong support for education, the Legislature approved an unprecedented \$4.9 billion in Chapter 70 education funding, which represents an increase of 3.4 percent over the previous fiscal year and increases funding for teacher health care costs by \$39 million. Education funding also features \$319.4 million to fund the Special Education Circuit Breaker, \$90 million for Charter School Reimbursement, \$68.9 million for Regional School Transportation and \$5 million to fund the Preschool Partnership Initiative.

The budget reflects the Legislature's commitment to ensuring the wellbeing of children and families by lifting the cap on benefits for children of low income families. This change takes effect in January 2019. The budget also provides \$2.5 million for continued support for early childhood mental health consultation services and \$20 million to support high-quality Early Education and Care (EEC) programs. The budget also provides \$10 million to create an EEC

workforce development initiative to tie professional development and higher education opportunities more closely to our community colleges.

As part of an ongoing effort to ensure access to safe and affordable housing for the most vulnerable Massachusetts residents, the budget provides \$100 million for the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP), \$32 million for the HomeBASE program, \$20 million for the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) Program and establishes a \$5 million rapid homeless rehousing program.

To address the ongoing opioid epidemic, the budget includes \$142 million for the Bureau of Substance Addition Services to create five recovery centers in Massachusetts. The budget features \$5 million to support community-based treatment program, \$4.9 million for step-down recovery services and \$1 million to provide increased access to Narcan to first responders.

The budget ensures that cities and towns, large and small, are empowered to effectively manage their regional transit systems to ensure reliable service and fiscal responsibility. Regional Transit Authorities across Massachusetts are allocated \$88 million to assure that our residents have access to reliable and affordable transportation.

The budget sets aside funds to establish monitoring for hiring, promotion and preferential treatment occurring within the State Police.

In addition the budget includes the following provisions highlighted below.

- Provides clear statutory authority to Juvenile Courts to protect unaccompanied immigrant youth aged 19 and 20 from deportation, continuing our long-standing value of protecting the children in our communities.
- The creation of a commission to examine funding operations for Sheriff departments, with an eye towards encouraging the use of best practices and reigning in rising costs, with a particular emphasis on recidivism reduction.
- With the goal of creating an accessible economy to all workers, the creation of a pilot program to promote employment in state contracts with persons with disabilities.
- Requiring the Administration to acknowledge and sometimes waive the unique tax burden on small businesses with high-turnover workforces that are the hardest hit by the Employer Medical Assistance Contribution (EMAC) Supplement assessment.
- Creates an Office of Health Equity to address social determinants of health and environmental justice to improve health outcomes among people of color.
- Expands access to non-profits working with the state to discounted Naloxone, helping to make it more available at a lower cost.
- Establishes of a permanent Tax Expenditure Unit in Department of Revenue that would examine the usefulness of every tax credit on an ongoing basis – to ensure our tax payers are receiving worthwhile returns on their investments.

The budget now moves to the Governor for consideration.

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