**SeNAte Accomplishments**

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**Affordable Care Act Implementation**

This legislation implements the federal Affordable Care Act into the Massachusetts health care system in order to expand access to health care for Massachusetts residents. It requires every full-time and part-time student enrolled in a public or independent institution of higher learning in the Commonwealth to participate in a qualifying student health insurance program. The Secretary of the Executive Office can establish a program to provide subsidies to assist eligible individuals in purchasing health insurance based on MassHealth. Eligible individuals are residents of the Commonwealth whose income is 300 percent or less of the federal poverty level who are not eligible for federal advanced premium tax credits or other benefits. (Ch. 35 of Acts 2013)

**Anti-Bullying in Schools**

This legislation calls for each school district (including charter and approved private schools) to develop, adhere to and update a plan to address bullying prevention and intervention in consultation with school staff, administrators, local law enforcement agencies, students, and parents and guardians. Each plan must include statements prohibiting bullying and cyber-bullying, a clear procedure to report such behaviors, a provision for anonymous reports, a clear process for investigating reports and the disciplinary actions that can be taken in response to bullying. Schools will have a bullying prevention curriculum informing parents about steps they can take, and building professional development skills of all school staff members. Each school district will annually report bullying incident data to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The Department will develop a student survey to assess school climate and the prevalence of bullying which is to be administered by each school district at least once every three years. (Ch. 86 of Acts 2014)

**Anti-Shackling Bill**

This legislation requires that female inmates be screened and assessed for pregnancy by a licensed health care professional upon admission to a correctional facility while awaiting trial or after sentencing. Correctional facilities housing female inmates will ensure that at least one member of their medical staff is trained in pregnancy-related care. A pregnant and postpartum inmate will be provided regular prenatal and postpartum medical care at her correctional facility. The Department of Correction will develop appropriate standards of care for these inmates which at a minimum will include the standards for health services set by the National Commission on Correctional Health Care.

During the second and third trimesters of pregnancy or post-delivery recuperation, an inmate will be transported to and from visits to medical providers in a vehicle with seatbelts and can only be restrained using handcuffs in front. A pregnant inmate will receive delivery care in an accredited hospital. An inmate in any stage of labor will not be placed in constraints at any time, including transportation. Only under extraordinary circumstances, a situation in which the inmate presents a serious threat to herself or others or risk of escape, can an inmate in post-delivery recuperation be placed in restraints. (Chapter 103 of Acts 2014)

**Autism**

This legislation creates a 35-member commission on autism within the Executive Office of Health and Human Services to make recommendations on how to improve services for individuals with autism spectrum disorders and monitor the implementation of policies impacting these individuals. It requires MassHealth to cover medically necessary treatments for individuals who are diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder, including services for applied behavior analysis. The bill also requires programs that provide residential or day care services and treatment for persons with a developmental disability to obtain a license from the Department of Developmental Services and requires administrators and teachers to have training in strategies for effective inclusive schooling for children with autism. (Enacted by Senate on July 31, 2014)

**Boston Exhibition and Convention Center**

This legislation authorizes $1 billion for an approximately 1,300,000 square foot expansion to the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center. The Massachusetts Convention Center Authority will develop a supplier diversity program to maximize participation from minority-owned, service-disabled veteran-owned and women-owned businesses as well as a workforce minority program and construction workforce training program.

The bill requires the Massachusetts Convention Center Authority to meet the requirements of LEED-Silver certification from the United States Green Building Council for new Boston Convention and Exhibition Center buildings and use best efforts to meet the requirements for existing buildings. The Authority must also comply with energy efficiency requirements.

A special obligation bond will be borrowed against the Convention Center Fund (CCF), which consists of tourism-based fees and taxes. 98.5% come from Boston and Cambridge, which are the areas that will directly benefit from this expansion. The bill also authorizes bonds to be issued for a term of 30 years and to be payable no later than June 30, 2060. The Treasurer will issue up to 10% of the bond authorization to create a debt service reserve fund to increase the marketability of the bonds. In addition, the bill confirms that the funds from this bond authorization will not be used for the purposes of a hotel subsidy. (Enacted by the Senate on July 23, 2014)

**Boston Strong License Plate**

This legislation authorizes the registrar to furnish, upon application, distinctive registration plates displaying a design memorializing the tragic events that occurred at the Boston Marathon on April 15, 2013 and the words “Boston Strong”, to the owners of private passenger motor vehicles. There will be a fee of no less than $50 for these plates in addition to the established registration fee for eligible vehicles. The portion of the total fee remaining after the deduction of costs from the issuance of the plates will be directed to the One Fund Boston, Inc. and distributed by the One Fund Boston, Inc. at its discretion. (Ch. 78 of Acts 2014)

**Biosimilars**

This legislation allows pharmacists to substitute a biosimilar for a biological medicine when the United States Food and Drug Administration has determined that the two biological products are interchangeable and the prescriber has not instructed otherwise. Following a substitution, the bill requires pharmacists to notify the prescribing practitioner and the patient.

The Public Health Service Act was amended in 2010 to create an abbreviated approval pathway for biological medicines that are biosimilar or interchangeable with an already approved biological medicine. This bill ensures that patients in the Commonwealth will have access to biosimilar products once they are approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration. (Chapter 143 of the Acts of 2014)

**Campaign Finance Disclosure**

This legislation strengthens reporting requirements for independent expenditure committees and brings a higher level of transparency to elections in the Commonwealth. Corporations, labor unions and political committees will be required to report within seven business days of making an independent expenditure or within 24 hours of making an independent expenditure if the expenditure is made within 10 days but more than 24 hours before a primary or general election.

The bill requires any independent expenditure or electioneering communication transmitted through paid television, internet advertising or print advertising appearing larger than 15 square inches to include a written statement of the top five contributors if contributions exceed $5,000 and directions to the Massachusetts Office of Campaign and Political Finance (OCPF) website for more information.

The bill directs political action committees to designate a depository for campaign funds and to report on all contributions received and expenditures made twice a month. The bill also prohibits public employees from serving as the treasurer of a political committee.

The bill requires all mayoral candidates to file reports with OCPF.

In addition, the bill increases individual contribution limits from $500 to $1,000 in a calendar year and increases the contribution limit by money order or bank check from $50 to $100.

The bill also removes an aggregate limit on individual campaign contributions in response to a recent Supreme Court ruling which struck down a similar federal provision.

For statewide candidate committees, the bill allows a contribution of up to $100 to another candidate committee, with an overall limit of $1,500 in a calendar year. However, if a committee receives public financing in the same year, no contributions are allowed.

To address accurate reporting for joint contributions, if a joint contribution does not indicate the amount to be attributed to each contributor, the amount will be attributed equally unless it will cause a contributor to exceed contribution limits. (Enacted by the Senate on July 30, 2014)

**Capital Bond Bill**

This legislation authorizes the issuance of up to $1.31 billion in bonds for the improvement of capital facilities of the Commonwealth and for general governmental operations, including $378 million for general state facility improvements, $312.5 million for health and human service state facility projects, $25.5 million for accessibility improvements at state facilities, $50 million for cultural facilities funded through the Massachusetts Cultural Facilities Fund, and $88.6 million for a municipal facility improvement grant program. It also includes $151.2 million for public library facility improvements, $20 million for renovations to the Massachusetts Senate Chamber, $6.2 million for a new vault in the state archives building, and $14.65 million for a municipal public safety facility and equipment grant program.

The bill states that no less than $100 million will be expended to address deferred maintenance at state universities and community colleges, including another $100 million for deferred maintenance at the University of Massachusetts. The bill also extends the availability of certain bond-funded spending authorizations and de-authorizes previous bond authorizations. (Enacted by the Senate on July 29, 2014)

**Capital Supplemental Budget**

This legislation provides for continued funding for capital improvements in the Commonwealth. It raises the amount that the Executive Office for Administration and Finance can sell and issue in bonds by $200,000,000 from $415,800,000 to $615,800,000. It also raises the amount that the Division of Capital asset Management and Maintenance can issue in bonds by $175,000,000 from $1,973,005,000 to $2,148,005,000. To provide for the continued availability of certain bond-funded spending authorizations which would otherwise expire, the balances of the allocations are extended through June 30, 2017. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the bonds that the state treasurer may issue may not extend 30 years. All such bonds must be made payable no later than June 30, 2048. (Chapter 27 of Acts 2013)

**Carbon Monoxide**

This legislation expands the required use of carbon monoxide alarms to schools and restaurants.

It requires schools with fossil fuel burning equipment to retrofit their fire alarms systems to also include carbon monoxide alarms. It also creates and funds a Carbon Monoxide Trust Fund at $7.5 million to cover the cost of retrofitting and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) will review plans prior to funding being allocated to school districts. DESE and the Department of Fire Services will also be required to determine best practices for school districts regarding carbon monoxide detection. All restaurants to integrate carbon monoxide alarms into their fire alarm systems when undergoing a significant remodel or construction.

To address the need to have working smoke alarms in homes, the bill requires all homes to be inspected for working smoke alarms prior to sale or transfer. It also allows the Board of Fire Prevention to require an upgrade or replacement of smoke detector devices after inspection. (Engrossed by the Senate on June 19, 2014)

**Chapter 90 Road and Bridge Repairs**

This legislation invests $300 million in available bonds for the Highway Division within the Massachusetts Department of Transportation for a program of transportation development and improvements, including maintaining, repairing, improving and constructing municipal ways and bridges, sidewalks, bikeways and other projects eligible for funding as a transportation enhancement project. The bill further states that all bonds must be made payable no later than June 30, 2048. (Chapter 18 of Acts 2013)

**Children of Corrections Officers**

This bill allows the children of corrections officers killed on the job priority on the civil service list for corrections officer positions. Currently children of police and firefighters killed in the line of duty have similar civil service priority. (Enacted by the Senate on July 31, 2014)

**Clearing Titles**

This legislation restores titles of foreclosed properties after thousands of foreclosure sales in Massachusetts were determined to be void as the result of recent state Supreme Judicial Court decisions. This bill will allow the affidavit that is recorded during the sale of the property to serve as conclusive evidence that the foreclosing lender is in compliance unless the foreclosure has been challenged within three years of its recording. Under current law, the affidavit can be rebutted by other evidence that shows the foreclosing lender was not in compliance. In addition, this bill provides a reasonable timeframe for those who have been improperly foreclosed on to assert their rights to ensure that borrowers continue to be protected from unlawful foreclosures.

(Enacted by the Senate on July 31, 2014)

**Compounding Pharmacies**

The legislation increases regulatory oversight of compounding pharmacies in the Commonwealth through added enforcement powers and the creation of specialty pharmacy licenses, as well as establishes sterile compounding and complex non-sterile compounding specialty licenses to be issued by the Board of Registration of Pharmacy and requires inspectors to conduct both planned and unplanned inspections of licensed pharmacies. Inspectors are required to be trained in sterile compounding and complex non-sterile compounding practices. The legislation also doubles the required continuing education hours for pharmacists and requires training in sterile and complex non-sterile compounding for pharmacists working in those facilities, creates an out-of-state pharmacy license and requires them to participate and comply with the Prescription Monitoring Program and requires stores and pharmacies to report any improper dispensing of prescription drugs that result in serious injury or death to the Department of Public Health and to report any serious adverse drug events that are the result of improper compounding or other pharmacist error to the Board.

The bill arms the Board with new enforcement powers, allowing the Board to assess penalties for pharmacy violations and suspend a pharmacy or pharmacist if there is a reasonable concern for the health, safety or well-being of the public. (Chapter 159 of Acts 2014)

**Corporate Manslaughter**

This legislation strengthens penalties against corporations convicted of manslaughter by raising the fine from $1,000 to no less than $250,000 and including the possibility of corporate debarment for up to 10 years. The statute instituting the $1,000 fine was signed into law by Governor John Brooks on February 19, 1819 and has not been amended since. Currently, the only penalty faced by corporations is a monetary fine. (S.732 engrossed by the Senate on September 12, 2013)

**Critical Incident Services**

This legislation states that no critical incident stress management team member, team leader or other participant who provides or receives critical incident stress management and crisis intervention services shall be required to testify or divulge any information obtained solely through the provision of or receipt of such services and any information shall be kept confidential and shall not be disclosed to a third party. However, a critical incident stress management team member, team leader or other participant may disclose such information if the information indicates the existence of a danger to the individual who receives the services or to another person or if the information indicates the existence of past child abuse upon the individual or abuse by a family or household member. (S.1861 was engrossed by the Senate on September 12, 2013)

**Defense Policies**

This bill grants, updates and revises defense policies regarding the defense policies of the Commonwealth, which have not been changed since the 1950s. The bill amends the membership of the Armory Commission by removing the air guard commander and adding an Assistant Adjutant General Army Office, an Assistant Adjutant General Air Officer, and the Army National Guard Facilities Management Officer.

It also outlines educational protections for members of the armed services, including ensuring that students performing service do not incur an academic or financial penalty because of a service obligation. Other protections in this bill include statutory protections for persons in the military forces against discrimination because of religious creed and sexual orientation as well as entitlement to employment protections.

The bill makes several more updates and changes, including setting the initial appointment period of the state staff at 6 years, requiring the Adjutant General have attained a grade not lower than that of Colonel, and removing the requirement that persons appointed as an officer in the Armed Forces of the Commonwealth be a resident of the Commonwealth.

The bill increases the monetary punishment for the unauthorized use of a military uniform by a non-service member from $300 to $1,000, increases the maximum fine from $50 to %500 for the unlawful maintenance of armories by private organizations and for unlawful drilling or parading with firearms and increases the minimum monetary punishments that may be imposed against civil officers who neglect or refuse to obey the law from $20 to $200.

In addition, the bill allows for the awarding of medals for service members of the armed forces of the Commonwealth who performed honorable services in support of the 2013 Boston Marathon response between April 15, 2013 and April 22, 2013. (H. 4109 engrossed by the Senate on July 30, 2014)

**Division of Professional Licensure**

This legislation modernizes licensing operations at the Division of Professional Licensure and amends the laws of certain Boards of Registration relative to staffing and compensation provisions, specifying that board members serve on a voluntary basis. Such changes are made to the Board of Registration in Podiatry, the Board of Registration in Optometry, the Board of Registration in Veterinary Medicine, the Board of Registration of Funeral Directors and Emblamers, the Board of State Examiners of Electricians, among others. (Enacted by the Senate on August 1, 2014)

**Domestic Violence**

This legislation strengthens penalties for strangulation, enhance protections for victims of domestic violence and establish new employment rights that will help victims keep their jobs and increase long-term economic productivity. It upgrades strangulation to a felony and creates penalties of up to 5 years in state prison, up to 2 1/2 years in a house of correction, by a fine of up to $5,000 or by both a fine and imprisonment.

The bill enhances penalties for strangulation when it causes serious bodily harm, is against a pregnant woman, there are subsequent strangulation convictions or if it is against a person who has a restraining order against the perpetrator to up to 10 years in state prison or 2 1/2 years in a house of correction and by a fine of up to $10,000. In addition, the bill increases penalties for subsequent restraining order violations to up to 5 years in state prison or up to 2 1/2 in a house of correction. The bill also creates a first offense for a domestic assault and battery charge.To protect victims of domestic violence, the bill eliminates a provision that allows courts to dismiss charges if both parties agree in a written statement for domestic violence related offenses.

The bill also takes steps to help victims recover and continue to make a living by requiring employers with 50 or more employees to allow up to 15 days of leave, with or without pay, to any employee who is a victim of domestic violence or lives with a family member who is a victim of domestic violence. Employees can use the leave to obtain medical attention, counseling, housing, protection orders and other legal assistance. (Enacted by the Senate on July 31, 2014)

**Domestic Workers**

This legislation establishes a bill of rights for domestic workers, as well as clear labor standards in the workplace. Besides providing a clear definition of “domestic worker,” it also clarifies eligibility for government services and benefits, like unemployment insurance, workers compensation and minimum wage protections, as well as rules for sleeping, meal and rest periods and requires that female domestic workers receive at least 8 weeks’ maternity leave if they are full-time employees. The legislation also includes a privacy right to prevent employers from interfering with a worker’s personal communication and effects as well as housing protections in the event that a worker is terminated without cause. (Chapter 148 of Acts 2014)

**E-911**

This legislation establishes a $0.75 surcharge on each retail transaction for prepaid wireless telecommunications service occurring in Massachusetts. This law took effect on July 1, 2013. (H.2131 was engrossed by the Senate on July 25, 2013)

**Economic Development**

The bill makes targeted investments in the state’s economic drivers including innovation and Big Data, workforce development, tourism and marketing. The bill includes $100,000 for the Chief Information Officer in the Division of Information Technology to establish an online business portal, which provides a step-by-step guide to starting a business in Massachusetts and the tools needed to complete this process.

To help students prepare for higher education after high school, the bill includes $750,000 for the Early College High School Initiative to allow students to enroll in college credit courses. It also requires the Department of Higher Education to assess stackable credentials programs offered at public higher education institutions in the Commonwealth to connect students with local businesses.

In addition, the bill outlines investments to help promote job creation and economic growth in underserved or struggling communities. It includes $10 million for the Gateway Cities Transformative Development Fund to revitalize and support residential, commercial, industrial and institutional development and financial assistance to promote collaborative workspaces.

The bill expands upon the Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP) that was established by the Legislature in 2012 to allow businesses to submit proposals to be certified as an expansion, enhanced expansion, manufacturing retention, or a local tax increment financing only project. This economic development bill provides municipalities with greater flexibility to enter into special tax assessments such as tax increment financing.

It also expands the Infrastructure Investment Incentive (I-Cubed) program by increasing the amount of total allowable program spending from $325 million to $600 million and raising the number of allowed projects in any municipality from 3 to 8.

The bill creates the Angel Investor Tax Credit to incentivize investment and foster growth in newly formed start-ups in Massachusetts. Investors are eligible for a 20 percent credit of the qualifying angel investment, 30 percent if the recipient business is located in a Gateway City. The bill also updates the research and development tax credit for businesses and creates an alternative simplified tax credit as another option to encourage research and development in Massachusetts.

In addition, this bill creates a 2014 sales tax holiday for the days of August16-17. Enacted by the Senate on July 31, 2014.

**Economic Independence Reform**

This legislation creates a job diversion program through the Department of Transitional Assistance and the Commonwealth Corporation to connect able-bodied individuals with full-time jobs before they start receiving benefits. It also revives the Full Employment Program that was originally establishes in 1995, and employers who hire from this program are eligible for a healthcare subsidy under the insurance partnership program and a subsequent tax credit after receiving the healthcare subsidy for one year. The bill requires specialists who are assigned to help high-risk recipients have a maximum caseload of 60.

To help recipients overcome the “cliff effect,” the bill develops an asset development program through DTA to allow them to save money for first, last and security rent payments and for education. It also allows pregnant teen to be eligible for the Teen Living Program at the start of their pregnancy.

For store owners who knowingly allow the purchase or prohibited products or services with an EBT card, who also possess a license to sell alcoholic beverages or lottery tickets, their licenses will be suspended for not less than 30 days upon a second or subsequent violation with the possibility of further disciplinary action. (Chapter 158 of Acts 2014)

**Eels and Elvers**

This legislation increases fines for the illegal catching of eels and elvers in the Commonwealth.

It raises the length requirement of the commercial taking of eels or elvers from 4 to 9 inches. The fine for violating any provision of this law is also raised from the previous $100 fine and/or imprisonment up to 30 days to a maximum fine of $10,000 and/or imprisonment of up to 30 days. (Enacted by the Senate on July 24, 2014)

**Elections Reform**

This legislation authorizes early voting for biennial state elections starting in 2016, making Massachusetts the 33rd state in the nation to allow early voting. Early voting for biennial state elections will begin 11 business days before an election and end at the close of the polls two business days before the election.

This legislation also creates an online voter registration system and will allow 16 and 17-year olds to preregister to vote in the Commonwealth for the first time and requires the Secretary to create an online voter registration system as well as an online tool where voters can check their voter registration status and inform them of their polling place. It allows the state to conduct election audits during presidential general election years.

It establishes an Election Laws Task Force to undertake a study on election issues including, but not limited to: the costs of early voting, administrative requirements of implementing and providing early voting for additional elections, expanding the use of technology including employing election day mobile alerts and “e-voting,” and more accessible voter registration such as same-day registration. (Chapter 111 of Acts 2014)

**Engineers and Architects Good Samaritans**

This legislation protects engineers, architects, environmental professionals, landscape architects, planners, land surveyors, licensed site professionals, and contractors who render voluntary services at the scene of a disaster or catastrophe. If they are acting without compensation and in good faith, they shall not be liable for any personal injury, wrongful death, property damage, or other loss caused by their acts, errors, or omissions in the performance of any engineering, architectural, environmental, landscape architectural, planning, land surveying, waste site cleanup, or contracting services for any site, structure, building, facility, project utility, equipment, machine, process, piping, or other engineered system or infrastructure, either publicly or privately owned.

The immunity provided in this section shall apply only to the provision of voluntary engineering, architectural, environmental, landscape architectural, planning, land surveying, waste site cleanup, contracting, or other professional design services during the natural disaster or catastrophe or within ninety days of the end of the natural disaster or catastrophe, unless the period of emergency is extended by an executive order issued by the governor under the governor’s emergency executive powers. It does not provide for immunity for wanton, willful, or intentional misconduct, or gross negligence.

The effective date of this act shall be the first of January next succeeding the date on which it shall have become a law. (Enacted by the Senate on July 31, 2014)

**Environmental Bond Bill**

This legislation provides for the preservation and improvement of land, parks and clean energy in the Commonwealth. This legislation authorizes a $1.9 billion, 4-year capital plan and includes $10 million for the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs for general improvements and replacements to infrastructure, $1.625 million for a conservation district grant program, $75.7 million for the Department of Environmental Protection for investment in water and air quality protection, and $255.4 million for the Department of Conservation and Recreation for the design, construction, reconstruction, removal, improvement, or rehabilitation of department reservations, forests, parks, harbor islands, and other recreational facilities.

The capital plan also establishes the Climate Change Adaptation Infrastructure Investment Fund for projects related to seawalls, jetties, revetments, retaining walls, and inland flood control, adds state agencies and authorities to the municipal street lighting program to add to cost savings for the Commonwealth, and requires an inventory and classification by the Executive Office of Public Safety of all existing quarries in the Commonwealth to identify the current use of the quarry, who is responsible, the degree of hazards and if there is potential for accidents. (Enacted by the Senate on July 31, 2014)

**Fiscal Year 2015 Budget**

The$36.5 billion state budget for Fiscal Year 2015 makes important investments in local aid, education, and human services including substance abuse treatment and prevention and mental health care. It includes $945.8 million to Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA) and $4.4 billion for Chapter 70.

The budget allocates $15 million to expand access to early education and funds a grant program at $9.1 million to support Early Head Start and Head Start programs. It also includes $519 million for UMass which will enable a freeze in tuition and fees for the second year. In addition, the budget dedicates money to implement the STEM Starter Academy, an initiative created in the FY14 budget aimed at strengthening and expanding STEM programming in community colleges.

The spending plan makes the lowest draw from the Stabilization Fund in four years and contributes about $1.79 billion to Massachusetts’ unfunded pension liability to accelerate the timetable for full funding.

The budget allocates almost $18 million in new spending to help combat substance addiction including $10 million for the Substance Abuse Services Trust Fund to provide substance abuse services to an additional 10,000 individuals in need of treatment.

To improve quality of care for people suffering from mental illness, the budget provides $10 million for the expansion of community-based placements for at least 100 discharge-ready patients in the Department of Mental Health system, while maintaining sheltered workshops for those individuals who wish to remain in a residential setting. The budget also includes numerous additional health and human services provisions including $60 million in MassHealth investments.

The budget also provides $185.6 million to reduce the Department of Children and Families social worker caseloads. It includes initiatives to improve communications, IT and record keeping practices, and ensure initial medical screenings of all children entering DCF care within 72 hours. Background checks will now be required for all current and future foster parents. (Enacted by the Senate on June 30, 2014)

**Fiscal Year 2014 Budget**

This $34.06 billion spending plan for FY14 boosted investments in Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA), Chapter 70, and the Special Education Circuit Breaker.

The budget increased key areas of local education funding including $4.31 billion for Chapter 70, full funding for educating high-needs special education students and $51.5 million for Regional School Transportation.

The budget also included $15 million investment in early education that will take approximately 2,000 children off the waitlist for income-eligible child care, $478.9 million for UMass to prevent tuition and fee increases in the upcoming school year, $38.3 million to increase rates paid to Disproportionate Share Hospitals to assist struggling hospitals with modernization assistance and funding payment reform, an increase of $8.4 million for mental health services, an increase of $6.7 million for substance abuse services, $187.2 million for elder home care services and an increase of $18.2 million to ensure safe and sustainable housing options. (Chapter 38 of Acts 2013)

**Fiscal Year 2014 Supplemental Budget (March)**

This $200.8 million supplemental budget covers time sensitive deficiencies and unexpected cost increases in FY 2014. It includes funds to address critical needs in the state’s emergency shelter programs, as well as provide additional funds for snow and ice removal. (Chapter 52 of Acts 2014)

**Fiscal Year 2014 Supplemental Budget (April)**

This legislation provides for supplementing the Office of the Treasurer and Receiver General by $600,000. (Chapter 70 of Acts 2014)

**Fiscal Year 2014 Supplemental Budget (May)**

This budget provides for supplementing certain items in the general appropriation act and other appropriation acts for fiscal year 2014. It includes $34.128 million for the Committee for Public Counsel Services within the Judiciary, $50 million for the Group Insurance Commission within the Department of Administration and Finance as well as $526,380 for the Department of Veterans Services, $4 million for the Department of Children and Families and $11,318,251 for the Department of Developmental Services. (Chapter 119 of the Acts of 2014)

**Fiscal Year 2013 Closeout Supplemental Budget**

This legislation supplements certain items in the general appropriation act and other appropriations acts for Fiscal Year 2013 to address unanticipated costs and time sensitive deficiencies before the end of the fiscal year on June 30, 2013. (Chapter 36 of Acts 2013)

**Fiscal Year 2013 Supplemental Budget (February)**

This $133.4 million supplemental budget provides funding for vital state programs and implementing reforms to the EBT system administered by DTA. It requires a photo on EBT cards for each eligible household member over the age of 18 to deter fraud. The bill also includes $56 million to fund payments for the Snow and Ice program, $10 million to support the Youth Summer Jobs program, $1 million for Community Health Center grants, and creates a $200,000 fund for victims of the Boston Marathon to help modify their homes or move into more accessible housing. (Chapter 3 of Acts 2013)

**Fiscal Year 2013 Supplemental Budget (June)**

This legislation supplements certain items in the general appropriation act and other appropriations acts for Fiscal Year 2013 to address unanticipated costs and time sensitive deficiencies before the end of the fiscal year on June 30, 2013.

(Chapter 36 of Acts 2013)

**Flood Insurance**

(Chapter 177 of Acts 2014)

**Good Samaritan**

This legislation ensures off-duty first responders who provide emergency care are not subject to lawsuits for helping those in need. The Good Samaritan Laws do not currently apply to off-duty first responders whose professional responsibilities include providing emergency medical care. (Chapter 38 of Acts 2014)

**Gun Violence**

This legislation permits Massachusetts to join the National Instant Background Check System and makes many changes to tighten and secure regulations for authorized gun dealers and sales, such as authorizing gun dealers to acquire criminal record information for all of their employees. Under this bill, the Commonwealth Fusion Center within the State Police is required to assist the Offices of the Attorney General and District Attorneys in investigating firearm crimes and creates a special Criminal Firearms and Trafficking Unit to assist in the investigation and prosecution of firearm crimes. Also, all secondary gun sales must be conducted over a real-time web portal to be developed under the Department of Criminal Justice Information Services.

The bill also establishes unsuitability standards that licensing authorities must use in making determinations relative to both Firearms Identification Cards and license to carry applications. Moreover, the bill removes pepper spray and mace from the Firearms Identification Card requirements for those ages 18 and over, but still requires persons between the ages of 15 and 18 to obtain a Firearms Identification Card.

To improve violence prevention, the bill creates a more standardized licensing process. While law enforcement officials have a procedure for issuing a license to carry (LTC), needed to purchase or possess any legal firearm including hand guns, this bill establishes a standardized process for determining the suitability of individuals applying for a FID card, needed for a shotgun or rifle. If a licensing authority deems an individual unsuitable for a FID card they must file a written petition in court which will be reviewed in a hearing. The legislation also specifies that a person may only be denied a FID card or LTC based on unsuitability if they are deemed a risk to public safety based on reliable information.

To support a secure and safe learning environment in our schools, the bill amends the medical emergency response plans by requiring consultation with local police, fire and emergency personnel and requires chiefs of police, in consultation with the Superintendent, to assign a school resource officer to provide law enforcement and services to the school district. The bill also places an emphasis on mental health awareness and treatment and requires the Department of Public Health to collect, analyze and report on data related to suicides in Massachusetts, as well as the Board of Registration in Medicine to develop a professional training module for physicians. The bill also establishes several new gun-related crimes and enhances penalties.

The legislation includes numerous provisions to increase accountability and oversight and includes increasing the fine for failure to report a lost or stolen firearm, requiring applicants renewing their LTC or FID cards to verify that they have not lost any firearms or had any firearms stolen, increasing the penalties for improper storage while improving related awareness and education measures, establishing penalties for gun dealers who fail to report a lost or stolen weapon and mandating that an individual whose LTC has been revoked, suspended or denied must surrender all firearms in their possession.

The legislation also removes self-defense spray from the definition of ammunition, eliminates Class B licenses, increases the punishment for being armed with a firearm while carjacking and establishes penalties for unlawfully transporting firearms into the Commonwealth for the commission of criminal activity or unlawful distribution. (Enacted by the Senate on July 31, 2014)

**Housing Authority**

This legislation strengthens the requirements of local housing authorities, increase performance management and encourage future innovation in housing development. The bill makes every member of a housing or redevelopment authority a fiduciary of the housing authority and requires one of the five members of the housing authority in a town to be a tenant of the housing authority. It increases training measures by requiring the members of a housing or redevelopment authority to receive biannual training from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) on the proper management of a housing or redevelopment authority. It also requires tenant members and local tenant organizations to receive independent technical assistance training, also by DHCD, to enable full participation in the oversight of the housing authority’s operation and capital planning.

The bill requires DHCD to create three capital assistance teams to provide capital planning and technical assistance, as well as maintenance and repair assistance, to all housing authorities in the Commonwealth. Under this bill, DHCD is also required to promulgate guidelines for contracts between a housing authority and an executive director and holds the authority to review all contracts and strike any provision in a contract that does not conform to the guidelines.

Housing authorities are required to participate in a performance-based monitoring program to be established by DHCD and also requires DCHD to develop and provide uniform standards for evaluating housing authority operations. The bill creates a regional public housing innovation program designed to achieve increased coordination and cooperation among several housing authorities, foster innovative models for the development, redevelopment and repair of public housing, and increase economic efficiencies and opportunities. In addition, it requires capital assistance teams to complete a survey of surplus land owned by DHCD and housing authorities to encourage development of new units of affordable housing, paying special attention to housing opportunities for disabled veterans and requires DHCD to implement a single statewide centralized waitlist for state-aided public housing. (Enacted by the Senate on July 31, 2014)

**Housing Bond Bill**

This legislation authorizes $1.4 billion in capital spending over the next five years to fund the production and preservation of affordable housing in the Commonwealth. This is the first long-term housing finance bill to come before the Legislature since 2008 and includes $500 million for the rehabilitation and modernization of state-assisted public housing. The legislation establishes the Early Education and Out of School Time Capital Fund to provide grants to non-profit childcare organizations for capital improvements to their facilities. Eligible providers must reserve at least 25 percent of their childcare slots for families receiving a public subsidy. This plan also allows for development projects within a half-mile of a mass transit hub to be eligible for funding by expanding the definition of transit-oriented development in the MassWorks Infrastructure Program. (Chapter 129 of Acts 2013)

**Information Technology Bond Bill**

The bill requires the Commonwealth’s Chief Information Officer (CIO) to adopt best practices for information technology project procurement, development and management to ensure effective oversight, increase competition among vendors and achieve cost savings. In an effort to encourage offering online services in all agencies and departments, the bill requires executive offices to issue a report detailing the level of services offered by each office and available over the internet.

The bill also increases transparency within the Information Technology Division and requires the CIO to submit reviews of information technology projects to the Governor and Legislature on an annual basis. In addition, the bill requires the Executive Office of Administration and Finance to issue a report on making financial information from agency contracts valued at over $1 million available online and to submit biannual reports to the Legislature detailing the spending on projects funded through this bill. (Enacted by the Senate on July 30)

**Interior Designers**

This legislation aligns with federal law by allowing interior designers to compete as the prime consultant for design services on state contracts that do not require a licensed architect or engineer. (H.4303 engrossed by the Senate on July 31, 2014)

**Juvenile Jurisdiction**

This legislation raises the age of juvenile jurisdiction, from 17 to 18 years old. It also provides for 17-year olds to be ordered into the custody of the Department of Youth Services, rather than into an adult prison or jail. In the case of violent criminal activity, the Juvenile Court can retain the discretion to impose an adult sentence. The legislation also provides that 17-year olds will no longer receive an adult criminal record and that they will benefit from other safeguards provided to juveniles. (Chapter 84 of Acts 2013)

**Juvenile Parole**

This legislation creates a new, three-tiered framework to apply to individuals aged 14 to 17 convicted of first-degree murder. Individuals convicted of murder in the first-degree become parole eligible in 20-30 years. Those convicted of murder with deliberately premeditated malice aforethought become eligible in 25 to 30 years, and the legislation sets a minimum term of imprisonment of 30 years for a person convicted of murder in the first degree with extreme cruelty and atrocity. To foster rehabilitation, the legislation prohibits the Department of Correction from limiting treatment including education, substance abuse, anger management and vocational training programs. (Chapter 189 of Acts 2014)

**Line of Duty Scholarships**

The legislation expands eligibility for the Public Service Grant and amends the line of duty benefits to include families of Deputy Sheriffs killed in the line of duty. It adds a scholarship to the existing Public Service Grant that covers tuition, room and board and fees for an undergraduate degree at a state college or university and makes eligible children of first responders, public safety officials and Massachusetts veterans killed in the line of duty. All the children of families included in the Line of Duty Act are eligible for this scholarship. (S.1299 engrossed by the Senate on April 22, 2014)

**Mercury Management**

This legislation transitions thermostat sellers from a voluntary recycling program to a mandatory program and requires manufacturers to make collection containers available to wholesalers, retailers and any city or town that requests one. A thermostat wholesaler may not offer or sell at final sale or distribute any thermostat unless they also act as a collection site for mercury-added thermostats and provide visible signage identifying their collection location.

The Department of Environmental Protection will collect and maintain data on the collection and recycling programs. On or before September 30th of each year, the Department will prepare an annual report detailing this data and file the reports with the Clerks of the House and Senate as well as the Chairs of the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture. (Enacted by the Senate on July 28, 2014)

**Military Bond Bill**

This bond bill authorizes $177 million in capital spending over the next five years to make improvements and expand the state’s military installations, including repairing the runway at the Barnes Air National Guard Base in Westfield. It requires MassDevelopment to oversee and implement all improvement and expansion projects funded by the bonds authorized in this bill. In addition, the Executive Office of Administration and Finance is required to submit a report prior to the execution of any improvement or expansion project and to submit bi-annual progress reports.

To continue efforts to advance the state’s military installations, this bill continues the work of the Massachusetts Military Asset and Security Strategy Task Force that was created in 2012, which will also work with Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and Rhode Island to identify opportunities to financially support military installations on a regional basis.

The bill authorizes MassDevelopment to enter into agreements to provide utility services, the Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) to convey a railroad right-of-way located in Mashpee, Bourne and Sandwich to the Massachusetts Department of Transportation and DCAMM to convey land or infrastructure owned by the Commonwealth on the Joint Base Cape Cod in Bourne, Falmouth, Mashpee and Sandwich to MassDevelopment for $1. In addition, this bill de-authorizes spending accounts for the Hanscom Air Force Base and the Natick Soldier Systems Center expansion projects that were approved by the Legislature in 2005. (Chapter 48 of Acts 2014)

**National Background Checks**

This bill requires all employees, volunteers, and contracted vendors who work directly with clients of the Department of Developmental Services to undergo finger-print background checks done for state and federal criminal history records. This bill also increases the protections that state has in place for this vulnerable population. (Enacted by the Senate on July 31, 2014)

**Natural Gas Leaks**

The bill identifies a three-tiered classification system to identify natural gas leaks in the Commonwealth, ranging from a Grade 1 hazardous leak that requires immediate repair to a Grade 3 non-hazardous leak that must be reevaluated during the next scheduled survey or within one year. Grade 2 leaks represent a probable future hazard and must be repaired within one year. In addition, gas leaks that are identified within a school zone must be prioritized under this bill and requires the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) to authorize the use of explosives within 500 yards of a natural gas pipeline. Each gas company is also required to report the locations, classification date and repair schedule of all leaks and include details on the reclassification of previously identified leaks.

To ensure the safety of each community, gas companies must be notified of any significant projects for public ways that exposes natural gas infrastructure and the project area must be surveyed for the presence of gas leaks.

The bill allows gas companies to propose plans to address aging or leaking natural gas infrastructure with priority given to the most immediate needs. Gas companies are also authorized to create programs to increase natural gas service for new customers with the goal of assisting low-income customers currently eligible for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and DPU is required to exempt LIHEAP program participants from any surcharges that result from the expansion of natural gas service. In addition, DPU will determine if winter surveillance and cast iron gas pipeline patrol is necessary and to what standards and the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security will issue a report on the adequacy of utility transformer vault safety standards. (Chapter 149 of Acts 2014)

**Privacy Rights**

This legislation makes taking a photograph or recording under or around a person’s clothing a misdemeanor when a reasonable person would believe that their sexual or other intimate parts would not be visible to the public. The bill includes punishments of imprisonment in the house of correction for up to two and a half years and/or a fine of up to $5,000. It expands the current dissemination statute for adults to include taking a photograph or recording under or around a person’s clothing without their knowledge. In addition, the bill enhances penalties for taking a photograph or recording of a child under 18-years-old by adding a possible state prison sentence of up to five years if charged with a felony and increasing the fine to up to $10,000. The bill penalizes the dissemination of these photographs or recordings with a state prison sentence of up to 10 years. (Chapter 43 of Acts 2014)

**Public Safety and Access to Care**

This legislation was filed in response to a U.S. Supreme Court ruling striking down buffer zones across the nation, including the existing 35-foot buffer zone that was passed by the Legislature in 2007. Under this bill, law enforcement officials are authorizes to order immediate withdrawal of one of more individuals who have on that day substantially impeded access to a facility entrance or driveway. After the order is issued, the individuals must remain at least 25 feet from the facility’s entrances and driveways for a maximum of eight hours. The bill prohibits a person from intentionally injuring or intimidating, or attempting to do the same, a person trying to access or depart from a facility by force, physical act or threat or force. In addition, the bill enhances the ability of private parties and the Attorney General to ensure compliance by filing a civil action in court. The bill also amends the Massachusetts Civil Rights Act to allow the Attorney General to obtain compensatory damages on behalf of an affected individual or entity, recover litigation costs and fees and seek civil penalties for the interference of constitutional rights. (Enacted by the Senate on July 29, 2014)

**Racing Days**

This legislation reduces the fee paid to the Massachusetts Gaming Commission by racing meeting licensees from two and one-half percent to three rights of one percent. It reduces the number of live racing days from 100 to 80 days for Plainridge Racecouse in Norfolk County and to 65 for Suffolk Downs in Suffolk County. (H.4365 engrossed by the Senate on July 31, 2014)

**Real Lives**

This legislation requires the Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to offer self-determination as an option to all individuals who are eligible for services through DDS. Participation is voluntary and a participant is permitted to terminate self-determination and return to traditional services provided through DDS at any time. This bill establishes a self-determination advisory board to advise DDS on its efforts to implement, publicize, evaluate, improve and develop information about self-determination.

The legislation further requires DDS to facilitate and assist in the preparation of a person-centered plan, individual support plan and individual budget for each participant, set minimum qualifications or goods that the participant may choose that allows the participant and their chosen planning team to compare possible combinations of individual budget expenditures through self-determination, and ensure that the dollar value of a participant’s individual budget is equivalent to the amount DDS would have spent providing services. DDS is also required to maximize federal financial participation. (Enacted by the Senate on August 1, 2014)

**Renewable Fuels**

This bill amends the alternative energy portfolio standard to include useful thermal energy that uses sunlight, biomass, bio-gas, liquid bio-fuel or naturally occurring temperature differences in the ground, air or water. This ensures that these sources of energy would receive financial incentives when used to produce thermal energy under the state’s renewable portfolio standard. This bill also increases the net metering cap for both public and private projects by 1 percent and creates a net metering task force to review the long-term viability of net metering in the Commonwealth. (Enacted by the Senate on August 1, 2014)

**Right to Publicity**

This bill protects the commercial value of artists, entertainers and other notable personalities. A personality shall have a property interest in their identity and an exclusive right to control the commercial use of the personality’s identity during their lifetime and for 70 years after the date of their death. Also under this legislation, a person who knowingly makes a commercial use of a personality’s identity in the Commonwealth during the personality’s lifetime or for 70 years after the date of the personality’s death, without written consent from either the personality or of the people who collectively own more than 50 percent of the aspect of the personality’s right of publicity, shall have infringed the personality’s right to publicity. Damages for infringement of the right of publicity shall be awarded in an amount equal to the greater of $1,000 or the actual damages suffered as a result of the infringement, including any profit of the infringer attributable to the infringement that is not taken into account in computing the actual damages. (S.2022 engrossed by the Senate on June 12, 2014)

**Right to Repair**

This legislation states that motor vehicle manufacturers shall make available for purchase by motor vehicle owners and by independent repair facilities the same diagnostic and repair information, including repair technical updates, that manufacturers make available to its dealers through the manufacturer’s internet-based diagnostic and repair information system or other electronically accessible manufacturer’s repair information system. (Chapter 165 of Acts 2013)

**2013 Sales Tax Holiday**

The sales tax holiday was created on August 10th and 11th, marking the eighth year the Commonwealth provided a two-day sales tax exemption. As in previous years, the sales tax holiday was applied to purchases under $2,500 and excluded vehicles, motorized boats, tobacco, meals and utilities. (Chapter 55 of Acts 2013)

**Secondary Metals**

The legislation calls for police in cities and towns to license secondary metal dealers with an initial registration fee of $250 and a renewal fee of $75. It establishes regulations for secondary metal dealers including record retention, verification and prohibits the receipt of receiving certain items and accepting false information. Under this legislation, it is illegal for secondary metal dealers to knowingly accept a false name, address, date of birth or proof of identification or a false source for the metal. The legislation explicitly bans secondary metal dealers from taking any street sign, manhole cover, beer keg, propane container for fueling forklifts, street light, guard rail, water meter cover, railroad track or spike, funeral or memorial marker, any metal item bearing the mark of a government entity, utility company, or brewer. They are also prohibited from taking any copper wire where the insulation has been burned or stripped away.

For the first violation, secondary metals dealers face a punishment of a fine of no more than $2,500 or 2 ½ years in the house of correction. A second or subsequent offense carries either a fine of no more than $5,000 and 2 ½ years in a house of correction or a fine of no more than $5,000 and no more than 5 years in state prison, or by both a fine and imprisonment. Half of the fees and fines collected will go to the municipality, and the remaining funds are put into a trust fund will be used to set up and maintain a secondary metals registry. (S.1916 engrossed by the Senate on November 20, 2013)

**Simulcasting**

This legislation extends simulcasting for 2 more years to July 31, 2016. (Enacted by the Senate on August 1, 2014)

**Software Sales Tax Repeal**

This legislation repeals the 6.25 percent sales tax applied to a range of computer and software services as part of the transportation finance bill. (Chapter 95 of Acts 2013)

**Special Election Provisions**

This legislation allows the state secretary to add or change dates in relations to functions surrounding the 2013 special election primaries and the election of the United States Senator in Congress. It outlines a full election calendar and states that the state election would take place on Tuesday, June 25, 2013. (Chapter 2 of Acts 2013)

**Statute of Limitations**

This legislation extends the amount of time an individual can claim an incident of sexual abuse from 3 years after the act occurs to 35 years and takes effect when the victim has reached 18 years old. Under this bill, a claim can be filed if it is made within the new 35 year limitation.

For individuals who do not immediately or reasonably discover the emotional or psychological harm caused by the incident, the bills grants an extension from 3 years to 7 years after the realization occurs. This provision is retroactive and applies to claims that have been filed before the changes were made. (Chapter 145 of Acts 2014)

**Substance Abuse Recovery**

This legislation increases opportunities for long-term substance abuse recovery in the Commonwealth by supporting a continuum of care and removing barriers that stand in the way of effective treatment.

To curb the public health risk of Schedule II and III drugs, the bill requires the Drug Formulary Commission to prepare a drug formulary of chemically equivalent substitutions, which must include abuse deterrent properties and consideration of cost and accessibility for consumers. Insurance carriers are required to cover abuse deterrent drugs listed on the formulary in the same manner that they cover non-abuse deterrent drugs and cannot impose additional cost burdens on consumers who receive abuse deterrent drugs. It also authorizes the Commissioner of the Department of Public Health to schedule a substance as Schedule I for up to one year if it poses an imminent hazard to public safety and is not already listed in a different schedule.

The bill strengthens the Prescription Monitoring Program by requiring the Chief Medical Examiner to file a report with the FDA's MedWatch Program and the Department of Public Health if a death is caused by a controlled substance and directs DPH to review the Program upon receiving a report.

The bill creates a commission to review prescription painkiller limitations by insurance carriers, including the system implemented by Blue Cross Blue Shield, and report recommendations and proposed legislation to the Legislature.

In addition, the bill removes prior authorization for substance abuse treatment if the provider is certified or licensed by DPH and removes prior authorization for Acute Treatment Services for all MassHealth Managed Care Entities and requires coverage of up to 14 days of Clinical Stabilization Services with utilization review procedures beginning on day seven. It also requires medical necessity of substance abuse treatment to be determined by the treating clinician in consultation with patient and that all insurance carriers to reimburse for substance abuse treatment services delivered by a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor.

The bill directs the Center for Health Information and Analysis to review the accessibility of substance abuse treatment and adequacy of insurance coverage and tasks the Health Policy Commission with recommending policies to ensure access and coverage for substance abuse treatment throughout the Commonwealth, as well as review denial rates for substance abuse treatment coverage by commercial insurers. (Enacted by the Senate on July 31, 2014)

**Sunday Alcohol Sales**

This legislation allows liquor stores in the Commonwealth to open at 10:00 AM instead of 12:00 PM. (Chapter 182 of Acts 2014)

**Transportation Bond Bill**

This $12.766 billion transportation finance bill to bolster the state’s transportation systems, improve existing infrastructure and assist Massachusetts’ communities in funding local projects.

It authorizes $300 million in Chapter 90 funding to help municipalities complete road, bridge and infrastructure improvement projects, and requires earlier notification of funding levels so cities and towns can prepare appropriately. The legislation includes funding such as $2.97 billion for state-wide non-federally aided road and bridge projects, $1.9 billion for interstate/non-interstate federal highways, $350 million in investments for Regional Transit Authority improvements as well as other state-wide enhancements to rail service and new regional transit authority facilities, $2.3 billion for South Coast rail improvements, creating a South Coast rail mitigation program to assist communities impacted by the South Coast rail project, and

$325 million the expansion of South Station, re-named the Governor Michael S. Dukakis Transportation Center at South Station. (Chapter 79 of Acts 2014)

**Transportation Finance**

The transportation finance plan guarantees $805 million in new resources for the transportation system by Fiscal Year 2018 and includes all tax provisions assumed in both the House and Senate Fiscal Year 2014 budgets, generating $500 million in new tax revenue.

The bill closes Department of Transportation (DOT) and MBTA funding gaps for Fiscal Year 2014, moves DOT personnel costs off the capital budget over three years, and requires DOT and the MBTA to generate own-source revenues and savings and share in the cost of funding an improved transportation system.

The bill also forward funds the Regional Transit Authorities starting in FY14, dedicates the motor vehicles sales tax proceeds to transportation and commits General Fund resources to close anticipated gaps in transportation financing through FY18, and ensures adequate funding support for transportation in fiscal years 2019 and 2020. (Chapter 46 of Acts 2013)

**Unemployment Insurance Rate Freeze**

This legislation freezes unemployment insurance (UI) tax rates at 2013 levels, stating that no employer shall be assigned an experience rate of less than 5.4% with respect to any calendar year beginning or after January 1, 1985. (Chapter 71 of Acts 2014)

**Unemployment Insurance/Minimum Wage**

This legislation increases the minimum wage to $11 per hour by 2017 and lower costs for businesses through an updated unemployment insurance rating table and multi-year rate freeze.

The compromise legislation increases wages for tipped workers to $3.75 per hour by 2017.

As part of unemployment insurance reform, the bill expands the experience rating table to allow stable employers to pay lower rates and require negatively rated employees to pay higher rates, from $0.73 per employee to $11.13 per employee. The expanded rating table also sets the taxable wage base at $15,000, an increase of $1,000 to achieve employer savings while ensuring the maintenance of a healthy Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund.

To further support stable employers in the Commonwealth, the bill also allows the experience rating of employers to be determined by the past three years, instead of the current one-year.

The bill reduces unemployment insurance costs for employers by expanding the seasonal employer exemption to 20 weeks. It also authorizes the Department of Unemployment Assistance to participate in a federal program that allows the interception of federal tax refunds to recover benefit overpayments.

Business owners will be allowed to collect unemployment benefits if they leave their company but will be required to pay back any money collected if they return to the same company within the same benefit year. Individuals will also be allowed to collect benefits if they quit a second job before they were laid off from their primary job. (Chapter 144 of Acts 2014)

**Uniform Guardianship**

This legislation adopts model rules to make it easier for family caregivers to provide care across state lines by stating that an individual’s “home state” has primary jurisdiction, followed by a state in which the individual has a “significant connection.” This creates a clearer process for determining which state has jurisdiction to appoint a guardian or conservator in case of conflict. (Enacted by the Senate on July 31, 2014)

**VALOR Act II**

This legislation builds upon existing legislation to expand opportunities and services for military personnel, veterans and their families. It provides increased property tax relief and enhances employment, educational and healthcare support services, creates a home modification program to help injured veterans stay in their homes and function independently, and authorizes the Secretary of Veterans’ Services to establish enhanced training and certification for veterans’ benefits and services officers. It allows students currently enrolled in college, who are called to active duty, to either complete their coursework without penalty following duty, or to withdraw and receive a tuition refund. Additionally, the legislation establishes a post-deployment council to make recommendations and study mental health issues to support military members transitioning to civilian life after deployment and requires the Department of Public Health to issue guidance to acute hospitals and ambulance service providers to ensure the identification of veterans in emergency settings. (Chapter 62 of Acts 2014)

**Water Infrastructure Reform**

This legislation significantly expands the spending capacity of the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust, formerly the Water Pollution Abatement Trust, with an increase from $88 million to $138 million and imposes a spending floor of 80 percent. It creates a sliding scale interest rate from 0 to 2 percent and establishes a principal forgiveness program for qualifying projects, and creates and allocates $3 million to a technical assistance program to be used for the development of asset management plans and to identify green infrastructure opportunities in the Commonwealth. The bill amends the Ocean Sanctuaries Act to create an approval process through DEP for discharging municipally treated wastewater into ocean sanctuaries. To defray the cost of the entry fee, which often acts as a barrier for cities and towns wanting to join the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority (MWRA), DEP is also permitted to administer a matching grant program for communities seeking to join the MWRA or any other regional system. The bill also gives the Public-Private Partnership Oversight Commission authority to assist in evaluating proposal for public-private partnerships received by cities and towns, simplifies the regulatory burden of complying with Title V and encourages regional projects by allowing public entities to jointly apply for planning grants to develop water pollution abatement plans. (Enacted by the Senate on July 31, 2014)