

February 8, 2007

Hon. Robert A. DeLeo
Chairman, House Committee on Ways and Means
c/o Toby.Morelli@state.ma.us

Budget Priorities – Rep. Will Brownsberger, 24th Middlesex District

Dear Chairman DeLeo,

Thank you for inviting members to submit written statements of budgetary priorities. My priorities are as follows. I have numbered them, but do not mean to rank them.

1. Funding of Amelia Earhart Dam Pumping Capacity Study (\$500,000): This project to control destructive flooding is of high importance to several districts. It is addressed in a separate letter from Chairman Paul Donato.
2. Increasing Chapter 70 and Special Education Circuit Breaker: I hope that we will be able to follow through on last year's commitment to build over five years to a minimum state contribution of 17.5% of foundation budget for all communities. I also hope that we will be able to fully fund and expand the special education circuit breaker.
3. Expanding Property Tax Circuit Breaker: Property taxes per home are well above the statewide average in Belmont and Arlington, yet these towns are both economically diverse -- many people on limited incomes are over-burdened by the property tax.
4. Public Housing Operating Subsidy (7004-9005): State funded public housing across my district is in noticeably degraded condition. I ask for an overall increase in operating funds and for the following earmarks (either in 7004-9005 or in 7004-0099) to address long standing glaring problems:
 - \$125,000 for the design and installation of an elevator at the Waverley Oaks elderly/disabled apartments in Belmont;
 - \$150,000 to insulate the 100 apartments (25 buildings) at the Belmont Village family development.
5. Broad Expansion of Funding for DCR and DEP. Parks and environmental protection appear to be badly under-funded at this time. Many parks in my district and elsewhere are in poor condition and worthy improvement proposals have remained unfunded. Funding cuts have also weakened enforcement. I hope that we are able to make across-the-board progress in restoring these areas.
6. Funding of Acquisition of Silver Maple Forest (\$6,000,000): See House Original Docket Number 1511, legislation filed to fund a joint state and local acquisition of a property to be managed by DCR -- acquisition of this property will benefit the entire region by preserving a locally unique eco-system for quiet enjoyment.

7. Expansion of Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (7004-9024): Increase of \$10.8 million to \$38,283,345. This program is essential to addressing the failure of the housing market to generate moderate income housing. It is particularly important in the greater Boston area where housing is expensive.
8. Expansion of METCO Funding (7010-0012): Increased funding specifically including cost-escalation language to reflect continually rising costs and funding for transportation, especially to include late transportation for children participating in after-school activities.
9. Stabilization of Services for GLBT Domestic Violence Victims (4513-1130): with language that “not less than \$658,000 shall be expended for the public health model of community engagement and intervention services and crisis housing for sexual violence and intimate partner violence in the GLBT community.”
10. Expansion of Certain Targeted Programs. The following additional programs have emerged as high priorities in my conversations with constituents and I hope that we will be able to grant them substantial increases:
 - 0321-1600, Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation
 - 0321-2100, Massachusetts Correctional Legal Services
 - 4406-3000, Services for Homeless Individuals (with new language for supporting permanent housing)
 - 4510-0106, Commission on End of Life Care
 - 4590-1503, Pediatric Palliative Care Program
 - 5046-1000, Geriatric Mental Health Services
 - 7004-3026, Housing Consumer Education Centers;
 - 7004-xxxx, Moving to Economic Opportunity (new pilot program providing rental vouchers while leveraging resources from job support programs in the community).
 - 7061-9626, Massachusetts YouthBuild Coalition
 - 9110-1640, Geriatric Mental Health
 - Affordable Housing Trust Fund
 - Soft Second Mortgage Program

I would be very grateful for any consideration that you can give to these priorities.

Respectfully,

Representative William N. Brownsberger
24th Middlesex District
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