



*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1008

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**SPEAKER DELEO UNVEILS COURT REORGANIZATION PLAN**  
**Calls for the Hiring of a Professional Administrator to Manage all Business Functions of the Courts;**  
***Outlines Probation Department Reforms; Seeks to Make Recommendations More Transparent***

(BOSTON) – Speaking today before the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, House Speaker Robert A. DeLeo (D – Winthrop) announced his court reorganization plan designed to improve court management and oversight.

The Speaker also offered reforms to the Department of Probation, including new guidelines to limit the influence of job recommendations in the hiring process both within the department and throughout state government.

Informed by meetings with Supreme Judicial Court Chief Justice, Roderick Ireland, as well as with former Chief Justice, Margaret Marshall, and key members of the Harshbarger Commission, among others, Speaker DeLeo gave details of his upcoming court reorganization legislation.

“Under court reorganization legislation being drafted as we speak, I am proposing that a professional, civilian court administrator with substantial expertise in finance and management be appointed to oversee and manage the business aspects of the trial court,” Speaker DeLeo said. “In separating the judicial and business functions of the court, the chief justices of each of the court departments will properly maintain responsibility for all other core judicial functions, such as monitoring caseload, assigning judges, judicial training and judicial discipline.”

The court reorganization legislation will also address issues at the Department of Probation, including its organizational placement within state government.

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“Under the bill I will file, the Probation Department will remain in the trial court. I have considered the Governor’s proposal to align probation with parole functions in the executive branch,” Speaker DeLeo said. “After having spoken with Justice Ireland and others, however, I believe that the functions of Probation are properly within the judiciary and so, should remain there.”

Speaker DeLeo also proposed new hiring processes within the Probation Department to ensure that only the most qualified candidates earn employment.

“With respect to hiring for the probation department, in order to make sure that all job candidates at the Probation Department meet a certain minimum standard, the bill will require that they take an objective test modeled on the exam used by the State Police,” Speaker DeLeo said. “The test will provide a pool of qualified individuals from which the administrators would select candidates to interview. Unless applicants exceed a required score, they cannot advance in the interview process. Period.”

To increase transparency in the hiring process, Speaker DeLeo’s bill will also propose new guidelines to govern recommending in hiring – not only in the Probation Department – but throughout state government.

The legislation will require all recommendations to be made in writing. Further, the bill will require recommendations to be shielded from hiring evaluators until candidates have reached the final stage of consideration. The bill will also make the letters of recommendation for those who earn a job in public service a matter of public record.

“A job recommendation is a serious matter. We all know that a job recommendation from a public official carries weight and I will be the first to say that all recommendations for successful candidates should be transparent,” Speaker DeLeo said.

Shifting to municipal employee health care costs, Speaker DeLeo reiterated his call to bring the health care of municipal employees into the state’s Group Insurance Commission unless cities and towns can find health care for an equal or lesser price.

“If cities and towns can’t meet or beat the GIC, they will be forced to join it,” Speaker DeLeo said. “If we want to do what’s right for our children who attend public schools; if we want to provide public safety protection at adequate levels; if we want our streets plowed and our trash collected – it’s high time we give cities and towns the tools – through legislation – to make more than a dent in the cost of municipal health insurance.”

In an effort to further aide cities and towns while simultaneously bringing jobs and economic growth to the Commonwealth, Speaker DeLeo said he will continue to work with the Governor and Senate President to build consensus on an expanded gaming plan.

“Governor Patrick is already talking about cutting \$65 million out of our local aid budget,” Speaker DeLeo said. “The need to replace that revenue is dire. And the quickest way to recoup it is through gaming. With the urgency for revenue and jobs in mind, I will continue to work with Governor Patrick and Senate President Murray to find a consensus on gaming.”

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Finally, Speaker DeLeo repeated his vow of a year ago to support no new taxes or fees in the House budget while proposing new initiatives to promote business growth in the Commonwealth and improve state government's interaction with the business community.

"I am interested in having the Department of Revenue publish reports on its prospective policies on a regular basis," Speaker DeLeo said. "Under this plan, taxpayers could express their views on these changes earlier in the process and before they are set in stone. I also support shortening the length of the tax audit process. Unless the state can complete an audit within 18 months, we will consider waiving taxpayer penalties for substantial underpayment of taxes."

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