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**CONTACT**

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**Legislature Passes Balanced Fiscal Year 2017 Budget**

BOSTON – The Massachusetts Legislature today enacted a $39.146 billion state budget for Fiscal Year 2017 that invests in key areas related to local aid, education, children’s health and safety, housing, health and human services, workforce training and economic development. The budget reflects a conservative tax revenue outlook and focuses on opportunities for savings while preserving key programs and services.

**QUOTE FROM SENATOR XXXX**

“The Senate worked tirelessly to achieve a balanced budget which preserves services to the Commonwealth’s most vulnerable while making strides toward investments to help build resilient communities. We always want to do more to build our economy, and I am proud of the work we have done,” said **Senate President Stan Rosenberg (D-Amherst).**

“This budget reflects our belief that we must be responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars, while keeping the Commonwealth moving forward on the path to resilience, especially during a time of fiscal uncertainty,” said **Senate Committee on Ways and Means Chair Karen E. Spilka (D-Ashland)**. “We honor our commitment to increased K-12 education funding, preserve investments for our most vulnerable residents, including our youngest children, and continue to direct resources to address the opioid crisis. This budget also significantly increases local aid to help cities and towns address community needs. Despite the challenges of lower than anticipated revenue, I am proud to say that the conference committee worked swiftly and collaboratively to produce a timely budget that preserves critical services, allows for strategic reductions and makes modest investments in our shared future.”

“Despite unforeseen fiscal challenges, this year’s budget still includes critical investments in many of our most valuable services and programs,” said **Senator Sal DiDomenico, Vice Chair of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means**.“I was proud to work with my colleagues on the conference committee to create a comprehensive final budget that includes many of our communities’ top priorities, all while remaining financially responsible. I am confident that the budget we have produced will address the many needs of our residents and will continue moving our entire Commonwealth forward.”

“We have Constitutional and moral obligations to live within our means, and this budget contains difficult choices to do just that by recognizing a projected $750 million downturn in revenue. Now that the budget moves to the desk of Governor Baker, all of us must remain committed to doing what it takes to boost the economy and prevent even harder choices in the future,” said **Senate Minority Leader Bruce Tarr (R- Gloucester)**.

The FY 2017 budget invests in cities and towns across the Commonwealth to strengthen local services and boost local aid for education, infrastructure, public safety and other community needs.

* $4.63B for Chapter 70 education funding, a $116.1M increase over FY 2016 to allow for an increase for every school district, $55 per pupil in minimum aid and 85% effort reduction.
* $1.02B for Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA) to bolster municipal capacity.
* $82M for Regional Transit Authorities.
* $61M for Regional School Transportation.
* $14.1M for local Councils on Aging, increasing the formula grant to $10 per senior per year and strengthening local senior center community programming and services.

Recognizing that the early years of a child’s life are critical for future success, the FY 2017 budget invests in education and care for the state’s youngest children

* $32.4M for early education quality improvements.
* $12.5M for early educator salaries, allowing for a 3.5% increase in rates for this critical workforce.
* $100K for a new anti-poverty pilot program to improve student outcomes and family finances through mentorships.

The FY 2017 budget makes targeted investments to support low income families and protect the health and safety of children across the Commonwealth.

* $940.8M for the Department of Children and Families, an $18.3M increase over FY2016 spending.
* Increases the Department of Transitional Assistance clothing allowance for low income children from $200 to $250 and invests $2M for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) caseworkers.
* Limits MBTA fare increases to 7% every 2 years to ensure Massachusetts residents have access to affordable public transportation.
* $800K for the Office of the Child Advocate and language to increase its independence to further its mission to protect the health, safety and well-being of children under the care of the Commonwealth.

The FY 2017 budget continues to direct resources to address the opioid crisis in Massachusetts and support substance abuse education, prevention and treatment programs and services.

* $139.2M in total funding to fight the opioid epidemic, an increase of $23.6M over FY2016 spending.
* $12.5M for step-down recovery services, secure treatment for opiate addition, family intervention services, recovery high schools and expansion of the nasal Narcan program to new sites.
* $1.1M to continue the extended release naltrexone pilot program.
* $1M for the Substance Abuse Trust Fund supporting innovative prevention services across the state.

The budget invests in workforce training, economic development and public higher education to prepare Massachusetts students and residents to join the workforce and ensure the Commonwealth’s economy continues to grow and lead.

* $508.3M for the University of Massachusetts, $250.3M for state colleges and universities and $273.9M for community colleges, reflecting a 1.6% increase overall for higher education over the FY2016 budget.
* $10.2M for Youth At-Risk Summer Jobs.
* $2M for the Big Data Innovation and Workforce Fund and $100K for a new Digital Health Internship Incentive program.
* $1M for the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund.
* $1.6M for Precision Manufacturing Pilot Program providing skills and training for unemployed and underemployed workers.
* $350K for a new public-private partnership matching grant program to establish college savings accounts for children in grades 7 through 12, encouraging low income students to pursue higher education and helping to close income and racial educational attainment gaps.

The FY 2017 budget supports a range of housing services and programs to connect individuals, families and vulnerable populations with safe, stable housing.

* $13M for Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT), a $500K increase over FY2016 to extend services to households of all sizes and configurations, including elders, persons with disabilities and unaccompanied youth.
* $1M for wraparound services for unaccompanied homeless youth.
* $300K for a new pilot program to provide coordinated services and housing stabilization preferences for families living in time-limited domestic violence or substance abuse housing

The budget now goes to the Governor for his review.

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