

MassSenate

2025–2026 SESSION IN REVIEW HIGHLIGHTS

Response 2025: Protecting our Residents and Defending our Values

In response to federal actions under the second Trump Administration that threaten critical programs and institutions in Massachusetts, we launched our **Response 2025** initiative this session, a coordinated effort to **protect our residents, defend our values, and lead Massachusetts through a difficult time.**



The **Senate Committee on Steering and Policy** led this effort, working closely with Senate committee chairs and policy experts. Response 2025 focused on four key goals:

- ✓ Assessing federal actions to determine their real-world impact on Massachusetts.
- ✓ Identifying policy solutions to mitigate potential harm and safeguard residents.
- ✓ Prioritizing state responses based on need, feasibility, and effectiveness.
- ✓ Providing clarity to the public by cutting through misinformation and helping residents understand the state's role in protecting their rights and services.

This effort has produced important results, including:



Passing **nation-leading protections for immigrants**, banning local law enforcement from civil immigration arrests and adding paths to hold federal officers accountable for violating rights.



Continuing our commitment to **reproductive freedom**, protecting health care providers and patients, and **preserving rights for transgender citizens** through the Shield 2.0 Act.



Counteracting costly tariffs with sales tax breaks for construction materials so **Massachusetts can continue to build much-needed housing.**



Passing one of the **nation's strongest data privacy bills**, giving consumers more control over their data, focused on protecting kids.



Defending our free press by **protecting journalists** and their constitutional right to report facts and hold institutions accountable.



Fighting back against politically motivated book bans while protecting librarians and educators from personal attacks.

MassSenate

2025–2026 SESSION IN REVIEW HIGHLIGHTS

Response 2025: Protecting our Residents and Defending our Values

Signed Into Law

AN ACT REGARDING FREE EXPRESSION

Protects freedom of thought in Massachusetts schools and public libraries and safeguards open access to books and other educational materials.

Bill S.2726 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on August 10, 2026

PROTECT ACT: PROMOTING RULE OF LAW, OVERSIGHT, TRUST AND EQUAL CONSTITUTIONAL TREATMENT

Protects residents from overreach by federal immigration authorities and ensures that local and state law enforcement are not involved in federal immigration enforcement. Strengthens due process protections; limits civil immigration enforcement in courthouses, public school grounds, hospitals, and other sensitive locations; expands protections for victims of crime; and increases transparency, accountability, and clarity for correctional facilities and law enforcement relative to civil immigration enforcement.

Bill H.5620 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on August 5, 2026

FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET PROVISIONS ON FOOD AND ECONOMIC SECURITY

Provides \$56.1 million for Emergency Food Assistance, an increase of \$6.1 million over Fiscal Year 2026, and \$21.5 million for the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP), which supports local farmers and access to healthy food. Protects access to benefits through Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) and Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled and Children (EAEDC), and includes a \$500 clothing allowance per child for families receiving TAFDC benefits.

Bill H.5555 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on July 9, 2026

FISCAL YEAR 2026 CONSOLIDATED SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET PROVISION ON IMMIGRANT LEGAL DEFENSE

Provides \$1 million for legal services to increase access to legal representation, advice, and advocacy for immigrants and refugees who are facing enhanced legal threats from the federal government. The funding is in addition to \$5 million allocated in the FY26 budget to establish the Massachusetts Access to Counsel Initiative.

Bill H.5470 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | Signed into law on June 12, 2026

FISCAL YEAR 2026 CONSOLIDATED SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET PROVISION ON TAX CHANGES

Responsibly phases in implementation of conformity with recent federal tax policy changes. Federal policies continue to cause economic uncertainty, including the federal One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OB3) signed into law last July. Mitigates near-term revenue impacts in FY26 and FY27 associated with the OB3 tax changes without sacrificing the state's competitive edge or risking cuts to programs and services that residents depend on.

Bill H.5470 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | Signed into law on June 12, 2026

FISCAL YEAR 2026 CONSOLIDATED SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET PROVISION ON HOUSING CONSTRUCTION

Creates a new sales tax exemption to foster multifamily housing production and combat the negative impact of tariffs and inflation on housing development in Massachusetts. Applies to the sales of building materials used in the construction of approved affordable, moderate income, and middle-income housing projects, capped at \$35 million per year. Follows the Senate's action through the Fiscal Year 2026 budget to study the removal of the sales tax for certain housing supply items.

Bill H.5470 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | Signed into law on June 12, 2026

MassSenate

2025–2026 SESSION IN REVIEW HIGHLIGHTS

Response 2025: Protecting our Residents and Defending our Values

Signed Into Law

AN ACT STRENGTHENING HEALTH CARE PROTECTIONS IN THE COMMONWEALTH

Known as the *Shield Act 2.0*, fortifies protections for those seeking and providing reproductive and transgender care.

Bill S.2543 | [Bill Text](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on August 7, 2025

FISCAL YEAR 2026 BUDGET FUNDING FOR IMMIGRANT LEGAL DEFENSE

Provides \$5 million to implement an immigration legal services program to increase access to legal representation, advice, and advocacy for immigrants and refugees who are facing enhanced legal threats from the federal government.

Bill H.4240 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on July 4, 2025

FISCAL YEAR 2025 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET POLICY PROVISION ON THE RIGHTS OF SCHOOLCHILDREN

Codifies protections for K-12 students who are English language learners.

Bill S.2575 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on August 5, 2025

FISCAL YEAR 2025 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET POLICY PROVISION ON IMPERSONATION OF AN OFFICER

Criminalizes the impersonation of a federal officer and increases penalties for impersonating a public official, including a federal officer.

Bill H.4761 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on November 25, 2025

FISCAL YEAR 2025 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET FUNDING FOR MEDICAID OUTREACH

Allocates \$10 million to Health Care For All (HCFA) for a new outreach and education campaign on Medicaid work reporting requirements.

Bill H.4761 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on November 25, 2025

FISCAL YEAR 2025 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET POLICY PROVISION ON IMMUNIZATION STANDARDS

Grants authority to the Department of Public Health (DPH) Commissioner to determine routine childhood immunizations and vaccination schedules rather than relying on the recommendations of the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.

Bill H.4761 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on November 25, 2025

FISCAL YEAR 2025 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET POLICY PROVISION ON EVICTION AND FORECLOSURE

Protects furloughed or otherwise unpaid federal employees from residential eviction or foreclosure during and immediately after any federal shutdown.

Bill H.4761 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on November 25, 2025

FISCAL YEAR 2025 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET FUNDING FOR SNAP Provides \$10 million for operational and technical enhancements at the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) to improve recipients' access to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits with the aim of forestalling harmful federal cuts.

Bill H.4761 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Signed into law on November 25, 2025

MassSenate

2025–2026 SESSION IN REVIEW HIGHLIGHTS

Response 2025: Protecting our Residents and Defending our Values

In Final Deliberations

TRANSPARENCY AND PUBLIC ACCESS IN STATE GOVERNMENT PROVISION ON PRESS PROTECTION

Guarantees legal protections for journalists by allowing them to protect the anonymity of their sources. The ‘press shield’ provision would prohibit anyone from compelling a journalist to disclose the identity of a confidential source except under certain qualified circumstances.

Bill H.5469 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Passed by the Senate on July 30, 2026

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOND BILL PROVISION PROTECTING UNIONS AND WORKERS

Initiates a trigger for state-level labor protections that are consistent with existing federal labor law, in the face of the federal government’s ongoing assault on labor rights and organized labor.

Bill S.3228 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Passed by the Senate on July 24, 2026

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE MASSACHUSETTS DATA PRIVACY ACT

Establishes clear rights for Massachusetts residents regarding their personal data, including the right to know what information is being collected and the ability to opt out of having their data used for targeted advertising or sold to other companies.

Bill S.2619 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Passed by the Senate on September 25, 2025

Passed by the Senate

FISCAL YEAR 2027 BUDGET PROVISION ON MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

Appropriates \$1 million to help the Museum of African American History continue its work in the face of the Trump administration’s pressure to sanitize the way in which American history is told and recorded. The museum, with two campuses and its Black Heritage Trails, is committed to ‘connecting colonial and early African American history & culture in Boston and the larger New England area with the abolition of slavery and current explorations of race and the struggle for human rights.’

Bill H.5555 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Passed by the Senate on May 21, 2026

AN ACT TO ENHANCE ACCESS, INCLUSION, SUPPORT AND EQUITY FOR MILITARY CONNECTED FAMILIES

Provides enhanced safety, stability and educational opportunities for military families.

Bill S.2709 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Passed by the Senate on November 6, 2025

AN ACT CLARIFYING THE DUTIES OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

Ensures a clear chain of command exists within the National Guard and that National Guard members receive training on how to identify whether orders violate Constitutional or statutory rights.

Bill S.2708 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Passed by the Senate on November 6, 2025

MassSenate

2025–2026 SESSION IN REVIEW HIGHLIGHTS

Response 2025: Protecting our Residents and Defending our Values

Passed by the Senate

FISCAL YEAR 2025 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET POLICY PROVISION ON NAME-CHANGE PETITIONS

Removing the automatic requirement of a public legal notice for name-change petitions filed in court.

Bill H.4761 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Passed by the Senate on October 23, 2025

AN ACT AMENDING CERTAIN ARCHAIC LAWS

Removes offensive language from state statutes and repeals outdated, unconstitutional laws that impinge upon individuals' civil rights.

Bill S.2564 | [Bill Text](#) | [Fact Sheet](#) | [Press Release](#) | Passed by the Senate on July 24, 2025