



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1054**

CAROLE A. FIOLA
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
6th Bristol District

STATE HOUSE, ROOM 236
TEL: (617) 722-2430
Carole.Fiola@MAhouse.gov

Vice Chair
Bills in the Third Reading

Committees:
Ways and Means
Judiciary
Economic Development and
Emerging Technologies

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Sara Lapointe
Sara.lapointe@mahouse.gov

House Reflects on 190th Session Accomplishments

*Focus on Supporting Communities, Fighting the Opioid Epidemic,
Reducing Gun Violence, and Helping Vulnerable Residents*

August 13, 2018 – (BOSTON) – Representative Carole Fiola and her colleagues in the Legislature to mark the end of the legislative session and highlight accomplishments of the productive 2017-2018 session that included the passage of several landmark bills. Over the past two years, the Legislature passed major bills relating to criminal justice, gun safety, those struggling with addiction, women’s rights, economic development, veterans benefits, consumer data protections, and energy and the environment.

“I am pleased to share that during this session, I was able to earmark and receive \$11 million dollars in state funding opportunities for local organizations that provide a variety of important benefits to our community” said Fiola. “It was a very busy legislative session as Massachusetts continues to be a leader on many fronts. I look forward to continuing my service to my constituents in Fall River, Assonet and the Commonwealth.”

Fiola’s Local Earmarks in FY2019 Budget

-**\$90,000** to replace traffic lights, outdated equipment in boxes that control red lights, and cross walk signs in the City of Fall River.

- **\$30,000** for the one time restoration of the Fall River Fire Museum.

-**\$30,000** to conduct a sewer feasibility study for the town of Freetown.

Fiola’ Local Earmarks in FY2018

-\$50,000 for the Fall River Police Department to receive police overtime for the public safety opioid overdose follow-up program in the City of Fall River, Project Reconnect.

-\$50,000 for the Veterans' Association of Bristol County, Inc. to restore and preserve their building on Pine Street.

-\$50,000 for the Creative Arts Network to continue to enhance their outreach to children and families in Fall River to bring a vibrant arts and culture community to help build economic development and tourism.

Fiola's Local Earmarks in Bond Bills

-\$1,000,000 shall be expended for the construction of a sewer line on Main street from the connection south to the center of Assonet in the town of Freetown.

-\$1,000,000 shall be expended for the replacement of rotted sections of the Fall River boardwalk from Davol street to the city pier in the city of Fall River

-\$1,000,000 shall be expended for the planning, design and construction of a parking garage on the waterfront property in Fall River; and provided further, that **\$2,000,000** shall be expended for the planning, design and construction of a parking garage in the downtown area of the city of Fall River.

-\$200,000 shall be expended for the repair and construction to eliminate the excessive drainage where the Route 24 Northbound Exit 8a abuts the Fall River Industrial Park in the city of Fall River

-\$500,000 shall be expended for the design and construction of the Southeastern Massachusetts Bioserve Education and Discovery Center.

-\$2,000,000 shall be expended for phase 4 of the Quequechan River Rail Trail to connect the urban river trail to Father Travassos Park in the city of Fall River

-\$3,000,000 shall be expended on the land acquisition for the purposes of market rate housing in the City of Fall River

190th Legislative Session Overview

Resting on a longstanding practice of strong fiscal management, the House **passed two balanced state budgets** – with landmark investments in early education, benefits for low-income families, workforce development, housing as well as programs to prevent and treat opioid addiction. These included no new

major taxes. This year the budget surplus increased the state's Stabilization Fund, which is expected to surpass \$2 billion in Fiscal Year 2019.

With the tragic events resulting from mass shootings unfolding across the country, the House took action twice this session to pass Massachusetts' already **nation-leading policies designed to promote gun safety**. This session Massachusetts took another leap forward with new laws aimed at preventing those individuals who pose a risk of causing bodily injury to themselves or others from owning or possessing a firearm as well as providing them with crisis intervention, mental health, substance abuse and counseling services. In addition the House passed legislation banning the sale, purchase or ownership of a "bump stock" device, which is designed to increase a weapon's rate of fire and mimic automatic gun fire.

These laws build on the House's landmark 2014 gun legislation, which led to Massachusetts being found one of the safest in the nation.

While focused on protecting our residents from gun violence, the House took action to address the opioid crisis with sweeping initiatives to **promote behavioral health for adults and children and measures to prevent substance use disorders**. The legislation takes measures including expanding access to non-opioid treatment options for pain management; establishing grants to benefit substance exposed newborn children and prohibiting discounts and rebates for certain prescription opioids. It also takes steps to improve the quality of patient care at treatment facilities, expands access to Narcan and increases training for law enforcement to respond to behavioral health crisis.

This past spring the House passed the most **comprehensive criminal justice reform** legislation in a generation to establish a more equitable system by supporting our youngest and most vulnerable residents, reducing recidivism, increasing judicial discretion, and enhancing public safety.

As part of the reforms, the House also acted on its longstanding legacy of **supporting the Commonwealth's most vulnerable children** by raising the minimum age of criminal responsibility from age seven to age twelve and decriminalizes first offense misdemeanors.

The reforms also bolster the House's multi-tiered approach to **combatting the opioid epidemic** by creating the nation's strongest law for trafficking Carfentanil and by strengthening the Fentanyl trafficking law. The legislation requires district attorneys to create pre-arraignment diversion programs for military personnel, veterans, and individuals with addiction or mental health issues. It removes the age restriction to participate in a diversion program, as they are currently only available to defendants 22 and under.

The legislation also includes the following provisions.

- For the first time in the history of Massachusetts, this legislation establishes a process for expunging criminal records.
- Courts will now be able to expunge the records of certain juvenile and young adults aged 18 to 21, and records in cases of fraud or where an offense is no longer a crime.
- The reforms eliminate mandatory and statutory minimum sentences for many low-level, non-violent drug offenses.
- The legislation also toughens penalties for repeat offenders convicted of operating under the influence (OUI).
- Updates the Commonwealth's Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) system to help individuals secure gainful employment and housing.

Building off its tradition of **protecting women's rights**, the House passed landmark legislation to guarantee reasonable accommodations and safety measures for pregnant workers. With an uncertain future for federal action on reproductive rights, the Legislature Massachusetts took decisive action to protect the rights for women across the Commonwealth by passing legislation to make Massachusetts the first state in the nation to repeal outdated state laws directed at limiting a woman's right to make decisions about her own reproductive health.

Renewing its dedication to **balancing the needs of workers and small businesses**, the House passed legislation to raise the minimum wage; create a framework for paid family and medical leave for most workers; and to establish a permanent sales tax holiday.

Facing an unprecedented number of data breaches across the nation from national credit reporting entities and retailers, the House passed a bill to put into place **enhanced protections for consumers against data breaches**, making it easier for consumers to monitor their credit and request security freezes on data. The bill requires entities that have been breached to limit fees associated with data breach protections as well as requires transparency from breached companies and their affiliates. In addition, breached entities are required to provide more detailed consumer notifications about data breaches and options to help consumers better protect themselves.

Recognizing the **critical needs of the Commonwealth's first responders**, the House passed a bundle of bills aimed at supporting enhanced police training, provisions to protect firefighting men and women as they recover from work-related cancer illnesses and providing access to confidential mental health services for those responders recovering from traumatic events.

The House also passed legislation to **spur economic development across the Commonwealth** with investments including public infrastructure projects like street and sewer improvements and for multi-family housing and mixed-use development, and transportations in communities across the Commonwealth. The legislation also includes investments to grow jobs coastal communities; fund;

boost manufacturing innovation; support technology development and innovation; and expand career technical training programs. The legislation also establishes and apprenticeship tax credit for employers and limits the enforcement of and sets standards for non-compete agreements in Massachusetts. The legislation funds initiatives that help small businesses grow and establishes tax credits for businesses that occupy vacant storefronts in downtown areas.

This session the House took action to foster an inclusive and just elections process by establishing **automatic voter registration**.

In response to calls for increased awareness of students of how the U.S. democratic system works at the local, state and federal government levels, the House passed a bill requiring schools to incorporate **civics education** with a focus on hand-on learning voting activities and media literacy.

As part of an ongoing effort to protect the health of our youth, **only those aged 21 or older may purchase tobacco products** in Massachusetts as a result of the Legislature's action on this issue.

Massachusetts is a known national leader in environmental policy and this year's **environmental bond bill** bolsters that position by dedicating \$2.4 billion to improving climate change resiliency and adaptation; enhancing environmental and natural resource protection; and investing in parks and recreational assets. The legislation passed ensures that Massachusetts can continue to plan for global warming and a changing climate, including along vulnerable coastlines with \$225 million in community investment grants, \$100 million for energy and environment coastal infrastructure, and \$54 million in rural investments.

This year the House passed a bill to **enhance certain benefits for Massachusetts veterans** including increases to assistance with funeral and burial expenses; relating to property taxes, and designating April 5 as Gold Star Wives Day and the last Sunday in September to Gold Star Mothers and Families Day.

Fiscal Year 2019 Budget Highlights

Education

- \$4.9 billion in Chapter 70 education funding, which represents an increase of 3.4 percent over the previous fiscal year and increases funding for employee health care costs by \$39 million.
- \$319.4 million to fund the Special Education Circuit Breaker, \$90 million for Charter School Reimbursement.
- \$68.9 million for Regional School Transportation.
- \$10 million to create an EEC community college workforce development initiative.

Children and families

- Lifts the cap on benefits for children of low income families.
- \$2.5 million for continued support for early childhood mental health consultation services
- \$20 million to support high-quality Early Education and Care (EEC) programs.

Housing

- \$100 million for the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP).
- \$32 million for the HomeBASE program.
- \$20 million for the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) Program.
- \$5 million rapid homeless rehousing program.

Opioid epidemic

- \$142 million for the Bureau of Substance Addiction Services to create five recovery centers in Massachusetts.
- \$5 million to support community-based treatment program.
- \$4.9 million for step-down recovery services.
- \$1 million to provide increased access to Narcan to first responders.

Transportation

- \$88 million to fund Regional Transit Authorities across Massachusetts to assure that our residents have access to reliable and affordable transportation.

State Police Oversight

- Sets aside funds to establish monitoring for hiring, promotion and preferential treatment occurring within the State Police and establishes an internal audit directed by the Inspector General of the Commonwealth to prevent the abuse of public money.