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|  | **Office of**  **Representative Carole Fiola**  Commonwealth of Massachusetts |

***Press Release***

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State House, Room 236

November 18, 2020

**House Passes Balanced Budget with Targeted Investments**

**in Housing, Economic Development and Food Security**

*Prioritizes relief to vulnerable populations, provisions to boost economic recovery*

*and support for students*

**November 18, 2020 –** BOSTON – **Representative Fiola**along with her colleagues in the Massachusetts House of Representatives passed its Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21) budget, which invests in programs and services across the Commonwealth. Funded at $46 billion, the House budget aims to address the sweeping effects of the global pandemic by making targeted investments in housing, food security, substance use addiction services, and domestic violence, sexual assault treatment and prevention programs. The budget also invests in programs that provide COVID-related supports for students and increases funding for developmental services.

“Amid this unprecedented global pandemic, the House passed a budget that helps protect those most vulnerable among us as a result of the widespread effects of COVID-19, with significant investments in housing, substance addiction programs, food security, and economic development,” said **House Speaker Robert A. DeLeo (D-Winthrop)**. “I am proud that this budget also furthers the House’s ongoing efforts to help survivors of domestic and sexual assault, safeguard women’s reproductive rights, protect the environment, and support high-quality early education and care. I thank Chair Michlewitz for his thoughtful work, and my colleagues in the House who played a critical role in this process including Vice Chair Garlick and Representative Malia.”

“This budget is the product of tireless work over the past few months that focuses on the challenges our constituents face in the midst of this difficult time, while avoiding any drastic cuts, something that was unthinkable back in the Spring,” said **Representative Aaron Michlewitz, Chair of the House Committee on Ways & Means (D-Boston)**. “In times of need, people rely on the services that government provides. Vital areas like housing stability, food security, education funding, and combating the growing concerns surrounding domestic violence and substance addiction, are all areas we prioritize in this budget. I would like to thank Speaker DeLeo for his guidance during this process, as well as Vice-Chair Garlick, Representative Malia, and all the members of the House for their support during these difficult circumstances.”

“I join with my colleagues in passing a state budget that stabilizes our communities and sustains valuable services for Massachusetts to be strong now and resilient in the future,” said **Representative Denise Garlick, Vice Chair of the House Committee on Ways & Means (D-Needham)**. “This budget holds true to the promise of education resources and local aid while protecting the hungry, the homeless, and those hurt by illness or economic hardship. We appreciate the leadership, experience and steady hand of Speaker DeLeo, and we are grateful to Chair Michlewitz for his extraordinary engagement in understanding and meeting the needs of our constituents and Commonwealth.”

The House continues to further its commitment to cities and towns by investing $1.1 billion Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA) and providing $5.3 billion in Chapter 70 **education funding**.  The House budget education allocations include:

·         $53 million in COVID-related student supports;

·         $340 million for Circuit Breaker Special Education reimbursement;

·         $117 million for Charter School Reimbursement; and

·         $82 million for Regional School Transportation reimbursement.

Additionally, **Representative Fiola** advocated for $50,000 to be expended to the Fall River Police Department in order to support services for communities at risk. Representative Fiola stated "I was proud to work with my colleagues throughout this difficult year to come out with a budget that continues to show that education, health, and public safety are priorities for our Commonwealth".

Due to the pandemic, access to safe and affordable housing for many families across the Commonwealth is threatened. The House budget represents its ongoing commitment to **housing and homelessness funding**. This year, the House makes targeted investments into rental and housing assistance to combat the eviction crisis by providing:

·         $50 million for the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition Program (RAFT);

·         $135 million for the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP);

·         $80 million for public housing subsidies;

·         $56 million for homeless individual shelters;

·         $13 million for homeless student transportation;

·         $11 million for Department of Mental Health Rental Subsidy Program; and

·         $8 million for unaccompanied homeless youth.

Keeping in mind the widespread economic effects of the COVID pandemic, the House makes specific investments in **labor and economic development** programs that provide opportunities for the Commonwealth’s workers and its businesses.  The House maintains its support for the Massachusetts Manufacturing Partnership with an investment of $2 million – funding which has helped many Massachusetts manufactures retrofit their businesses into the PPE market. Other investments include:

·         $50 million for economic development including;

o   $15 million for local Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)

o   $15 million for community development financial institutions

o   $10 million for matching grants for capital investments by small businesses

o   $6 million for small business technical assistance grants

·         $ 46 million for Adult Basic Education Services;

·         $19 million for summer jobs for at-risk youth;

·         $7 million Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund;

·         $2.5 million in Urban Agenda Grants; and

·         $1.4 million for small business development.

The House budget continues its ongoing commitment to **high-quality early education and care** (EEC) and supporting the EEC workforce. The budget invests in those who work with children by increasing rates for early education providers by $20 million and supporting continuing education opportunities with community colleges. The House budget also includes the following EEC investments and initiatives:

·         $15 million for Head Start grants;

·         $10 million for sliding fee scale reserve for childcare subsidies;

·         $10 million for EEC Workforce Higher Education Opportunities;

·         $2.5 million in early childhood mental health grants;

·         $11 million for child care resource and referral agencies; and

·         Establishes the Early Education and care Economic review commission to review childcare funding and make recommendations on policy changes to expand access.

The House budget continues to dedication substantial resources toward supporting **public higher education** and increases scholarship funding for students. These investments include:

·         $284 million for state universities;

·         $305 million for community colleges;

·         $560 million for the University of Massachusetts system;

·         $120 million in scholarship funding; and

·         $4.8 million for the STEM Starter Academy, to support underrepresented students in STEM fields at community colleges.

This fiscal year funded at $19 billion, MassHealth is the largest investment the Commonwealth makes in its most vulnerable residents including the working poor and the homeless. In response to the threats to reproductive rights for women on the national level, House also voted to remove barriers to women’s reproductive health options and protect the concepts enshrined in **Roe v. Wade**. The budget also invests in critical **health and human services** agencies and providers including:

·         $307 million for the Department of Children and Families for social workers, family support and stabilization, and foster care and adopted fee waivers;

·         $30 million in emergency food assistance; and

·         $13 million for the Healthy Incentives Program.

Keeping in mind those affected by **domestic violence**, the House budget establishes a grant program to provide domestic violence advocate services across the state to connect survivors with essential services.

In order to support programs for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, the House budget increases funding for **developmental services** to $2.1 billion and includes $264 million for community day and work programs across the Commonwealth. The House budget also includes the following investments:

·         $236 million for state-operated residential services

·         $78 million for family respite services; and

·         $39 million for autism omnibus services.

The budget furthers the House’s ongoing commitment to fight the **opioid epidemic**. To provide assistance to those who are battling substance addiction, the budget increased funding for the Bureau of Substance Addiction Services to $162 million while offering continued support for step-down recovery services, jail diversion programs, and expansion of access to life-saving medication.

The House budget includes funding for **the judiciary and ongoing criminal justice reform**, including a $761 million investment in the trail court and $20 million for criminal just reform implementation. The budget also includes:

·         $24 million for civil legal aid to provide representation for low-income individuals via the Massachusetts Legal Assistance Corporation;

·         $9.6 million for a new community-based re-entry program; and

·         $4 million for a pre and post-release services grant program.

The House calls for $302 million in spending for **environmental programs**, which aim protect the Commonwealth’s natural resources. These investments include:

·         $50 million for state parks and recreation;

·         $40 million for the Department of Environmental Protection;

·         $16 million for fisheries and wildlife protection;

·         $8.1 million for agricultural resources;

·         $2.1 million for ecological restoration; and

·         $500,000 for the Commonwealth’s endangered specials program.

The budget is now with the Senate.

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