



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
House of Representatives
State House, Boston 02133-1054

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Representative Smola supports effort to reimburse cities and towns for early voting costs

BOSTON – Representative Todd M. Smola (R-Warren, Ranking Member, Committee on Ways & Means), is backing a proposal to reimburse cities and towns for the costs associated with the implementation of the state’s early voting law during the November 2016 state election cycle.

The proposal, which was sponsored by the House Republican Leadership, was adopted unanimously by the House of Representatives today as an amendment to the \$123.2 million final deficiency supplemental budget for Fiscal Year 2017. A vote by the state Senate is still required before the measure can be sent to Governor Baker for his signature.

“The introduction of early voting in Massachusetts required a significant investment of time and resources by our cities and towns,” said Representative Smola. “I’m proud to support this effort to compensate the communities of the First Hampden District for all the work they did to ensure that the process ran smoothly.”

Approved by the Legislature in 2014, the Massachusetts early voting law allows registered voters to cast a ballot as early as 11 business days prior to election day, and up to two business days before the election, every two years as part of the biennial state elections. The law was first implemented for the November 2016 statewide election, when more than 1 million early votes were cast.

In February of 2017, State Auditor Suzanne Bump ruled that some of the expenses incurred by municipalities to implement the early voting law constituted an unfunded mandate, and suggested these costs should be borne by the Commonwealth.

The language adopted by the House today sets aside \$485,559 to reimburse cities and towns for costs that have previously been certified by the Division of Local Mandates within the state auditor's office. Municipalities will have until December 31, 2017 to apply for the funding.

The spending bill now moves to the Senate for further action. For additional information please contact Representative Smola at Todd.Smola@mahouse.gov or (617)722-2100.

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