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## **Representative Smola backs \$1 million funding appropriation for municipal early voting costs**

**BOSTON – Representative Todd M. Smola (R-Warren, Ranking Member, Committee on Ways & Means)** joined with his House colleagues to approve more than \$1 million in funding to reimburse cities and towns for the costs associated with implementing the state’s early voting law.

The funding appropriation was adopted unanimously by the House of Representatives on January 31 as an amendment to a \$17.6 million supplemental budget for Fiscal Year 2018. The House Republican-sponsored amendment, and the underlying spending bill, were both approved on separate roll call votes of 151-0.

Approved by the Legislature in 2014, the early voting law was first implemented for the November 2016 state election. In February of 2017, State Auditor Suzanne Bump ruled that some of the expenses incurred by municipalities to implement the new law constituted an unfunded mandate, and suggested these costs should be borne by the Commonwealth.

Last October, Representative Smola and the House Republican Caucus were able to secure a \$485,559 funding appropriation for early voting reimbursements as part of the House version of the Fiscal Year 2017 final deficiency budget. Although the final version of the bill did not contain any funding for early voting costs, it did include language directing the state auditor to certify the costs for each municipality and report back to the Legislature by January 10.

“Returning this funding to our cities and towns has been a longstanding priority for the House Republican Caucus,” said Representative Smola. “I’m hopeful the Senate will act quickly to pass the supplemental budget so we can deliver this money to our communities without any further delay.”

In addition to covering early voting costs, the supplemental budget also includes:

- \$15 million in one-time funding to assist school districts with the unanticipated costs associated with the influx of students whose families fled Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands following hurricanes Maria and Irma;
- \$700,000 for the Committee for Public Counsel Services; and
- \$250,000 for the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination.

The supplemental budget now moves to the Senate for further action. For additional information please contact Representative Smola at [Todd.Smola@mahouse.gov](mailto:Todd.Smola@mahouse.gov) or (617)722-2100.

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