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House of Representatives
State House, Boston 02133-1054

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Representative Smola Supports Creating Task Force to Review Unfunded Educational Mandates

BOSTON – Representative Todd M. Smola (R-Warren, Ranking Member, Committee on Ways & Means) joined with his House colleagues this week to support the creation of a task force to review all unfunded mandates the state currently imposes on public schools. Members of the House Republican Caucus offered the proposal as an amendment during the first day of debate on the state budget for Fiscal Year 2017. The amendment was approved on a voice vote on April 25.

“The number of mandates handed down by the state has been mushrooming, and we need to get a handle on this problem to minimize the financial burden for our cities and towns,” said Representative Smola. “Teachers should not have to spend hours filling out paperwork when their time could be better spent preparing lessons for their students.”

The Educational Mandate Task Force will be charged with reviewing all state laws, regulations and directives that impose requirements on school districts, including mandates that require preparing and submitting reports and data to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). In addition to identifying the total estimated costs associated with these mandates, the task force will also be asked to develop recommendations for streamlining, consolidating or eliminating any mandates or reporting requirements that are outdated, duplicative or unnecessary.

“The sheer number of unfunded mandates stifles innovation and reduces local control, and we need to curtail this practice,” said Representative Smola. “The recommendations of the Task Force would be a welcome relief for the educators and administrators of our school districts.”

Between 1995 and 2008, DESE added 4,055 new documents and directives for educators and administrators. DESE added an additional 5,382 documents between 2009 and 2013, an average of about 3 or 4 new directives per day.

For additional information please contact Representative Smola at Todd.Smola@mahouse.gov or (617)722-2100.

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