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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 30, 2015

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House Passes Balanced FY16 Budget with No New Taxes or Fees

BOSTON – State Representative Todd Smola (R-Warren), the Ranking Member of the House Committee on Ways and Means, joined colleagues in the Massachusetts House of Representatives to pass its FY16 budget, which emphasizes economic growth through investments in multiple areas including education and local aid. The \$38.05 billion spending bill includes no new taxes or fees and reduces its reliance on one time revenue sources.

“The House of Representative’s budget is a careful balance of investment and discipline,” said Representative Smola. “Our commitment to local aid was the key focus. We increased unrestricted government aid by \$35 million and our chapter 70 funding for education of \$4.5 billion is the highest it has ever been. We are providing an increase of \$25 per pupil, which is a step in the right direction for our kids.”

The FY16 budget strengthens behavioral health efforts in last year’s budget and the landmark substance addiction law through investments and programs. Many of the provisions focus on co-occurring disorders and finding sustainable ways to aid in both prevention and recovery. The budget includes more than \$10 million in new funding for programs focused on substance addiction prevention and treatment.

In addition to behavioral health and substance addiction initiatives, the House’s budget includes numerous provisions to support Massachusetts’ most vulnerable citizens. The House focuses its homelessness efforts on prevention, devoting \$20 million in new funding to programs. Funding for the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) is increased to a historically-high level to help families stay in their homes and out of the costly shelter program. Massachusetts has proven itself as a national leader in supporting those with developmental disabilities. It also allocates \$12 million in new funding for

autism services and maintains critical programs within the Department of Developmental Services.

“This budget makes a solid investment to important human service programs,” said Representative Smola. “We were able to avoid increasing taxes and keep a strong bond rating intact. I am very pleased with the House proposal.”

The budget will now go to the Senate. For additional information please contact Representative Smola at Todd.Smola@mahouse.gov or (617)722-2100.

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