



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

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Representative Smola supports FY17 House budget that holds the line on taxes and increases local aid

BOSTON – Representative Todd M. Smola (R-Warren, Ranking Member, Committee on Ways & Means) joined with his colleagues in the House of Representatives to approve a \$39.5 billion state budget for Fiscal Year 2017. The budget was engrossed on a vote of 156-0 on April 27.

Like the budget proposal Governor Baker released in January, the House budget does not contain any tax increases and significantly reduces the state's reliance on one-time revenues. It also provides for increased local aid for cities and towns.

“As legislators, our first priority is to the taxpayers of the Commonwealth and making sure their tax dollars are being spent wisely and efficiently,” said Representative Smola. “The Baker-Polito Administration has set a high standard for fiscal responsibility, and the House budget in many ways reflects this pro-taxpayer approach.”

State tax revenues for Fiscal Year 2017 are expected to total \$26.86 billion, which represents a 4.3 percent increase over the current revenue projections for Fiscal Year 2016. However, both Governor Baker and the House have attempted to limit spending growth to just 3.5 percent.

The House budget funds Chapter 70 education aid at \$4.6 billion, which is \$96 million more than the current fiscal year and \$24 million higher than the Governor's proposal, allowing for a guaranteed statewide minimum increase of \$55 per pupil. Unrestricted general government aid, which can be used for a wide range of municipal spending purposes, is increased by \$42.1 million to a total of \$1.022 billion.

Representative Smola noted that under the House budget plan, Brimfield will receive \$1,223,352 in Chapter 70 education aid and \$374,868 in unrestricted state aid. Holland will receive \$919,098 in Chapter 70 education aid and \$194,067 in unrestricted state aid. Palmer will receive \$10,784,150 in Chapter 70 education aid and \$1,928,274 in unrestricted state aid. Sturbridge will receive \$3,707,004 in Chapter 70 education aid and \$744,926 in unrestricted state aid. Wales will receive \$933,261 in Chapter 70 education aid and \$227,105 in unrestricted state aid. Ware will receive \$9,311,180 in Chapter 70 education aid and \$1,659,994 in unrestricted state aid. Warren will receive \$869,917 in unrestricted state aid.

The House budget increases funding for the “Pothole” account from \$2.5 million to \$10 million to provide extraordinary relief to school districts that experience a substantial shortfall between their Chapter 70 aid and target Chapter 70 aid. The budget also includes \$276.6 million for Special Education Circuit Breaker reimbursements – fully funding the state’s share of special education aid for local school districts at 75 percent – while also providing \$85.5 million for charter school reimbursements and \$60 million for regional school transportation reimbursements.

For the second consecutive year, the House budget does not draw money from the state Stabilization Fund. Instead, it provides for \$210 million to be deposited into the fund, which will bring the balance to \$1.47 billion. The House budget also relies on \$253 million in one-time revenues, which is about \$350 million less than the current budget.

The budget now moves to the Senate, which is expected to release its own spending proposal in mid-May.

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

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