

# *MassSenate*

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## **Massachusetts State Senate**

*Interim Session Report*

*2021–2022 Legislative Session*

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*May 2022*

# Interim Session Report

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2021–2022 Legislative Session

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# MassSenate

## Investing in the Commonwealth: Appropriations & Funding Commitments

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### Passed by the Constitutional Convention

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**Increasing investment in transportation and education through the Fair Share Act.** During a constitutional convention, the Massachusetts Legislature once again voted to move forward a ballot question to amend the Massachusetts Constitution to place an additional four per cent tax on annual taxable income in excess of \$1 million. This revenue would fund repair and maintenance projects for roads, bridges or public transportation as well as public education, including support for early education and care and public higher education. The constitutional amendment will be placed on the ballot in 2022.

*A Proposal for a legislative amendment to the Constitution to provide resources for education and transportation through an additional tax on incomes in excess of one million dollars ([S.5/H.86](#)) was passed by the Constitutional Convention on June 9, 2021.*

### Signed into Law

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**Ensuring an open, transparent, and thorough public process for the distribution of funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).** This legislation places federal dollars into a segregated fund that is controlled by the Legislature, ensuring that communities, stakeholders and members of the public throughout the Commonwealth can provide feedback on how these recovery dollars should be used.

*An Act relative to transferring federal funds to the Federal COVID-19 Response Fund ([S.2466/H.3827](#)) was signed into law on June 28, 2021, as Chapter 22 of the Acts of 2021.*

**Helping Massachusetts get ‘back to better’ through the Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) budget.** This \$48.07 billion budget maintains fiscal responsibility, does not cut services despite the uncertainty surrounding the pandemic recovery, and makes targeted investments to address emerging needs, safeguard the health and wellness of the most vulnerable populations and ensure residents will benefit equitably as the state recovers from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Taking into consideration strong tax revenue performance in Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21), the final FY22 budget increases revenue assumptions by \$4.2 billion over the December 2020 consensus revenue projection for a new tax revenue projection of \$34.35 billion. The FY22 budget transfers funds into the Stabilization Fund, projecting an estimated balance of approximately \$5.8 billion for this crucial ‘rainy day’ fund at the end of the fiscal year. Maintaining the Legislature’s commitment to implementing the Student Opportunity Act (SOA) by Fiscal Year 2027, the first year of the SOA is fully funded, consistent with the \$5.503 billion local aid agreement reached in March 2020, amounting to an increase of \$220 million over FY21. Additionally, a supplemental payment of \$250 million was transferred to the Pension Liability Fund to reduce the Commonwealth’s pension liability.

*An Act making appropriations for the fiscal year 2022 for the maintenance of the departments, boards, commissions, institutions and certain activities of the Commonwealth, for interest, sinking fund and serial bond requirements and for certain permanent improvements ([H.4002](#)) was signed into law on July 16, 2021, as Chapter 24 of the Acts of 2021.*

**Addressing time-sensitive needs through a supplemental budget.** This \$261.6 million supplemental budget for FY21 addresses time-sensitive deficiencies, extends expanded voting options, provides support for the implementation of the 2020 landmark police reform law and makes investments to further the Commonwealth's recovery from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The supplemental budget also includes \$191 million to provide support and stability for our early educator workforce, as well as \$27.9 million for one-time economic relief payments to families receiving transitional assistance.

*An Act making appropriations for fiscal year 2021 to provide for supplementing certain existing appropriations and for certain other activities and projects ([H.3973](#)) was signed into law on **July 29, 2021**, as **Chapter 29 of the Acts of 2021**.*

**Meeting the needs of the Commonwealth and ensuring fiscal stability.** The Fiscal Year 2021 closeout supplemental budget addresses time-sensitive deficiencies that require the Legislature's attention due to unanticipated costs in FY21, and sets aside unobligated FY21 surplus funds to be considered later in the fall. Programs funded in the bill include collective bargaining and labor-relations, special education schools, alcohol and substance use facilities, and programs designed to mitigate overcrowding in homeless shelters by offering supportive housing.

*An Act making appropriations for the fiscal year 2021 to provide for supplementing certain existing appropriations and for certain other activities and projects ([H.4200](#)) was signed into law on **October 20, 2021**, as **Chapter 76 of the Acts of 2021**.*

**Investing in communities hit hard by COVID-19 and supporting the ongoing economic recovery through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and Fiscal Year 2021 surplus spending.** This \$4 billion omnibus spending package delivers targeted support to workers and businesses, as well as housing, health care, mental and behavioral health, climate preparedness, education, and workforce development, with a focus on making equitable investments and prioritizing communities disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Following six public hearings and more than a thousand pieces of testimony received, the House and Senate's spending proposals were unanimously approved by each chamber. This bill utilizes \$2.55 billion in federal American Rescue Plan funds and \$1.45 billion in Fiscal Year 2021 surplus funds.

*An Act relative to immediate COVID-19 recovery needs ([H.4269](#)) was signed, in part, into law on **December 13, 2021**, as **Chapter 102 of the Acts of 2021**.*

**Preventing future spread of COVID-19 and its variants and addressing overpayment of unemployment insurance.** This \$101 million supplemental budget provides residents with greater access to tests, vaccines, and masks, and prioritizes communities disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic as well as frontline workers. The bill also provides increased flexibility for unemployment insurance recipients to address overpayments of pandemic unemployment benefits and funds an expanded multilingual campaign to notify unemployment claimants of their legal rights.

*An Act making appropriations for the fiscal year 2022 to provide for supplementing certain existing appropriations and for certain other activities and projects ([S.2626/H.4345](#)) was signed into law on **February 15, 2022**, as **Chapter 22 of the Acts of 2022**.*

***Increasing assistance for the COVID-19 response, housing, restaurants, and Ukrainian refugees.*** This \$1.67 billion supplemental budget for Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) provides funding for the state’s long-term COVID-19 response, housing and energy assistance for families, and extends popular dining and take-out options. In response to the ongoing war in Ukraine, the legislation also provides for the resettlement of Ukrainian refugees in Massachusetts and divests the state’s pensions fund from Russian assets, along with other timely investments.

*An Act making appropriations for fiscal year 2022 to provide for supplementing certain existing appropriations and for certain other activities and projects [\(H.4578\)](#) was signed into law on **April 4, 2022**, as **Chapter 42 of the Acts of 2022**.*

# MassSenate

## COVID-19 Response

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### Signed into Law

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***Guaranteeing COVID-19 emergency paid sick leave to workers and avoiding drastic unemployment insurance (UI) rate increases for employers.*** This legislation ensures that all Massachusetts employees, including frontline workers in hospitals and classrooms, receive emergency leave for up to five paid days off for COVID-related concerns. For unemployed workers whose income falls below 200 per cent of the poverty line, this legislation provides targeted relief by waiving penalties for missed tax payments on UI benefits received in 2020. For employers, this bill prevents increases in the UI rate schedule for 2021 and 2022, providing employers with needed stability and relief as the Commonwealth continues to recover. Furthermore, this legislation allows for state borrowing, secured by a temporary employer assessment, to ensure the solvency of the UI trust fund and excludes forgiven PPP loans from gross income for small businesses organized as pass-through entities.

*An Act providing for Massachusetts COVID-19 emergency paid sick leave ([H.3702](#)) was signed into law on **May 28, 2021**, as **Chapter 16 of the Acts of 2021**.*

***Extending critical protections instituted during the COVID-19 State of Emergency.*** This legislation temporarily extends a slate of measures, which were implemented during the COVID-19 State of Emergency, beyond the State of Emergency's expiration on June 15, 2021. Provisions that were extended pertained to eviction protections, COVID-19 testing and vaccine administration at community health centers, unemployment benefits for individuals without access to childcare, virtual public meetings, remote notary activities, relaxed town meeting quorum requirements, skilled nursing in assisted-living facilities and expanded outdoor dining and alcohol to-go at restaurants.

*An Act relative to extending certain COVID-19 measures adopted during the state of emergency ([S.2475](#)) was signed into law on **June 16, 2021**, as **Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021**.*

***Extending COVID-19 emergency paid sick leave for workers.*** This legislation extends the emergency paid sick leave previously extended to Massachusetts employees, including frontline workers in hospitals and classrooms, to April 1, 2022. It allows all workers to receive emergency leave for up to five paid days off for COVID-related concerns, including paid leave from work to attend a vaccine appointment or to assist a loved one in getting a vaccine appointment. It also expands eligibility to parents who might be forced to take time off from work to take their child to receive a vaccination. The nation leading COVID-19 emergency paid sick leave program instituted by the Massachusetts Legislature provided over \$100 million in benefits to workers impacted by the pandemic.

*An Act extending COVID-19 Massachusetts emergency paid sick leave ([H.4127](#)) was signed into law on **September 29, 2021**, as **Chapter 55 of the Acts of 2021**.*

## **Budget Appropriations & Additional Policy Related to COVID-19**

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### ***Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Highlights***

- \$18.98 billion for MassHealth, providing over 2 million of the Commonwealth's children, seniors, and low-income residents access to comprehensive health care coverage
- \$175.6 million for substance use disorder and intervention services provided by the Bureau of Substance Addiction Services
- \$98.4 million for children's mental health services, including \$3.9 million for the Massachusetts Child Psychiatric Access Program (MCPAP) and MCPAP for Moms to address mental health needs of pregnant and postpartum women
- \$40.8 million for early intervention services, to ensure support is available to infants and young toddlers with developmental delays and disabilities, including funds to support health equity initiatives
- \$40 million to provide additional aid to districts experiencing increases in student enrollment compared to October 2020
- \$15 million to support local and regional boards of health as they continue to work to address the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic
- \$12.5 million to support a student telebehavioral health pilot, public awareness campaigns, loan forgiveness for mental health clinicians, and initiatives to mitigate emergency department boardings for individuals in need of behavioral health support
- \$6 million for Social Emotional Learning (SEL) grants to help K-12 schools bolster social emotional learning supports for students, including \$1 million for a new pilot program to provide mental health screenings for K-12 students

### ***July 2021 Supplemental Budget Highlights***

- \$11 million for the Department of State Police for pandemic-related costs
- \$9.9 million for increased COVID-19 costs at the Department of Public Health

### ***December 2021 ARPA Bill Highlights***

- \$500 million for premium pay bonuses for essential workers who worked in person during the COVID-19 pandemic, up to \$2,000 per worker
- \$260 million for acute hospitals impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic
- \$50 million for nursing facilities, including \$25 million for capital support to increase the quality of patient care and \$25 million for workforce initiatives
- \$25 million for youth-at-risk supports and grant programs for community violence prevention and re-entry organizations, focused on communities disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic
- \$5 million for Health Care For All to conduct a community-based MassHealth redetermination and vaccination outreach, education, and access campaign targeted in communities disproportionately impacted by the pandemic

### ***February 2022 Supplemental Budget Highlights***

- \$50 million to further increase the availability and encourage use of COVID-19 testing and vaccination throughout the state. This investment includes:
  - \$7 million to assist community organizations in promoting vaccine awareness and education in disproportionately impacted communities, as well as for a new grant program through the Massachusetts Cultural Council for cultural institutions to help promote vaccine awareness and education
  - \$5 million to expand the capacity of community health centers to test and vaccinate, including funding to hire additional staff
  - \$5 million for increasing vaccination rates among five through eleven-year-olds

- \$25 million for the state to purchase and distribute high-quality masks in Massachusetts, with priority given to education and health care workers
- \$25 million to replenish the State’s Emergency COVID Paid Sick Leave Program

***April 2022 Supplemental Budget Highlights***

\$700 million for planning the state’s long-term COVID-19 response, including:

- \$433 million for no-cost COVID-19 testing services to be available to residents of all ages and from all parts of the state
- \$125 million to support the workforce involved in COVID-19 response efforts including temporary staffing and nursing rapid response teams
- \$72 million for treatment for individuals with COVID-19
- \$45.5 million for vaccination efforts, including pop-up sites, clinics, and additional testing infrastructure

***Fiscal Year 2022 FY22 Budget Policy Highlights***

- Requiring the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to create targeted outreach to frontline workers about resources available to individuals experiencing trauma related to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Directing the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to conduct a study evaluating the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the delivery of educational services and support to marginalized students
- Directing the Children’s Behavioral Health Advisory Council to analyze and report on the existing and anticipated impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on children’s behavioral health and the services and support needed
- Empowering the commission on autism to investigate and report on the impact of COVID-19 on individuals of color who have a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder

***December 2021 ARPA Bill Policy Highlights***

Establishing an equity and accountability review panel to track the amount and percentage of American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funds spent in underserved communities and awarded to minority-owned and women-owned businesses

***April 2022 Supplemental Budget Policy Highlights***

- Extending popular pandemic-related provisions including outdoor dining services, and beer, wine and cocktails to-go through April 2023
- Extending COVID-19 related bonuses for members of the Massachusetts National Guard



# MassSenate

## Active Military & Veterans

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### Signed into Law

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**Supporting long-term care for veterans in Holyoke and across Massachusetts.** This legislation advances the construction of a modern facility to meet the needs of future generations of veterans. In addition to \$400 million in bonds authorized for the design and construction of a new veteran's home facility in Holyoke, this legislation authorizes the issuance of \$200 million in bonds to increase geographic equity and accessibility related to the continuum of long-term care services for veterans across the state. This legislation also includes Project Labor Agreement (PLA) language that mandates a pre-bid, pre-hire labor agreement for the construction of the new facility in Holyoke, which will ensure that the workforce is local, diverse, inclusive, well-trained, safe, and skilled.

*An Act financing the reconstruction of the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke ([H.3770](#)) was passed over a veto into law on **July 1, 2021, as Chapter 15** of the **Acts of 2021**.*

### Passed by the Senate

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**Supporting military families who relocate to Massachusetts through the SPEED Act.** This legislation would speed up the professional licensure process for military spouses to ensure they can continue their careers, allow for advanced and virtual enrollment for military children to prevent disruptions in education, provide in-state tuition continuity for military-connected college students, and establish a Purple Star Campus designation to identify public schools that show a major commitment to military families. The SPEED Act would also help Massachusetts meet criteria used by the Department of Defense and military officials when considering basing assignments and federal investments for military installations.

*An Act relative to military spouse-licensure portability, education and enrollment of dependents ([S.2559](#)) was **passed by the Senate** on **October 21, 2021**.*

**Restructuring the chain of command at Holyoke and Chelsea and improving oversight to prevent future tragedy.** This legislation would increase public oversight over the administration of state-operated veterans' homes in Holyoke and Chelsea. To improve safety and transparency at the veterans' homes, the bill would restructure the chain of command to more closely match established administrative practices used in hospitals and other large organizations. This legislation follows continued scrutiny of administrative failures at the veterans' home in Holyoke that led to the tragic deaths of 77 veterans during the early days of the pandemic, and builds on recommendations made by the Special Joint Oversight Committee on the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke COVID-19 Outbreak, which investigated that tragedy.

*An Act relative to the governance, structure and care of veterans at the Commonwealth's veterans' homes ([S.2739/H.4441](#)) was **passed by the Senate** on **March 10, 2022**.*

## **Budget Appropriations & Additional Policy Related to Active Military & Veterans**

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### ***Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Highlights***

- \$97.3 million for a variety of veterans services and programs overseen by the Department of Veterans' Services (DVS)
- \$2 million in for veterans' mental and behavioral health supports through Mass General's Home Base Program
- \$600,000 for the women veterans' outreach program
- \$200,000 for an independent, impartial ombudsperson at Holyoke Soldiers' home

### ***July 2021 Supplemental Budget Highlights***

- \$13 million for National Guard activations, including pandemic-related work
- \$5.4 million for the Chelsea and Holyoke Soldiers' Homes for pandemic-related costs

### ***December 2021 ARPA Bill Highlights***

- \$150 million for supportive housing, with priority for veterans, including \$20 million for supportive housing for veterans located across the state in areas not primarily served by either the Chelsea or Holyoke Soldiers' Homes
- \$1.5 million of state financial support to the Massachusetts Military Support Foundation, Inc. for empowerment centers that distribute food services to veterans in need
- \$500,000 for transportation for participants in the Massachusetts Veterans' Treatment Courts to reduce regional inequities and provide services to veterans across the state

### ***Fiscal Year 2022 FY22 Budget Policy Highlights***

Authorizing the Registry of Motor Vehicles (RMV) to issue distinctive registration plates, free of charge, for Medal of Liberty recipients

### ***December 2021 ARPA Bill Policy Highlights***

Ensuring that the Massachusetts Medal of Liberty can be awarded to service men and women who have died as a result of training accidents while in the line of duty

### ***April 2022 Supplemental Budget Policy Highlights***

Extending COVID-19 related bonuses for members of the Massachusetts National Guard

# MassSenate

## Equity, Access & Inclusion

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### Passed by the Senate

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***Creating a non-binary option on driver's licenses and birth certificates.*** This legislation provides for a non-binary option other than male or female on birth certificates and drivers licenses, and would also direct the state to begin the process of allowing a non-binary option for all state forms and instances where a gender choice is required. For birth records, the gender listed could be changed by an adult, an emancipated minor, or the parent or guardian of a minor. The gender designations on a birth record could include 'female', 'male' or 'X'—which indicates that the person is another gender or an undesignated gender. No documentation beyond a self-attestation is required to make a change.

*An Act relative to gender identity on Massachusetts identification ([S.2540](#)) was **passed by the Senate** on **September 23, 2021**.*

***Honoring Black history.*** Two bills, each commemorating Black history in Massachusetts, were passed by the Senate. One designates July 8 as Massachusetts Emancipation Day, also known as Quock Walker Day, and the other would designate the third Saturday in July as Negro Election Day. Massachusetts Emancipation Day commemorates the life of Walker, who was born to enslaved African parents in Massachusetts and was the driving force behind the 1783 Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruling that slavery was incompatible with the constitution of the Commonwealth. Negro Election Day honors an election process originating in 1740 among Salem's enslaved African community. Both holidays, which have been celebrated in Massachusetts by members of the Black community, would be officially recognized under this legislation.

*An Act to establish the third Saturday in July as Negro Election Day ([S.2703](#)) was **passed by the Senate** on **February 17, 2022**.*

*An Act designating July 8 as Massachusetts Emancipation Day, also known as Quock Walker Day ([S.2704](#)) was **passed by the Senate** on **February 17, 2022**.*

***Preventing discrimination against natural and protective hairstyles through the CROWN Act.*** This legislation prohibits discrimination based on hairstyles by incorporating hair texture, hair type and protective hairstyle into the definition of race in the Massachusetts General Laws (MGL). The protection means that no workplace, school district, school committee, public school, nonsectarian school, or any equivalent school organization can adopt or implement policies that would impair or prohibit a natural or protective hairstyle that has been historically associated with one's race.

*An Act Prohibiting Discrimination Based on Natural and Protective Hairstyles ([S.2808/H.4554](#)) was **passed by the Senate** on **March 31, 2022**.*

***Supporting equity in the cannabis industry.*** This legislation helps members of communities disproportionately harmed by marijuana prohibition and enforcement take part in the Commonwealth's growing cannabis market through the creation of a new social equity fund and improvements to the local licensing process. The fund would facilitate new access to capital by making grants and loans, including forgivable and no-interest loans, to equity applicants, and would receive ten per cent of annual revenue collected from the marijuana excise tax. The bill reaffirms that fees in Host Community Agreements (HCAs) cannot exceed three per cent of a business' annual gross sales and must be reasonably related to the costs associated with hosting a cannabis business in a city or town, among other measures related to HCAs.

*An Act relative to equity in the cannabis industry ([S.2823](#))  
was **passed by the Senate** on **April 7, 2022**.*

***Creating a Women's Rights History Trail in Massachusetts.*** This legislation creates a Women's Rights History Trail to celebrate the rich history of the women's rights movement and contributions women have made across the Commonwealth. It creates a task force responsible for soliciting public input and conducting research to recommend sites, properties, and attractions that are historically and thematically associated with the struggle for women's rights and women's suffrage, and reflect Massachusetts' geographic and demographic diversity. The bill also requires the inclusion of accomplishments of women veterans in the trail, as well as recommendations for increasing the representation of women in the artwork of the State House. Members of the task force would include representatives from the Massachusetts Historical Society, the Commission on the Status of Women, and the Massachusetts Caucus of Women Legislators, among others.

*An Act relative to the creation of a women's rights history trail ([S.2802](#))  
was **passed by the Senate** on **April 7, 2022**.*

## **Budget Appropriations & Additional Policy Related to Equity, Access to Justice & Civil Rights**

### ***July 2021 Supplemental Budget Highlights***

- \$12.5 million for costs associated with the implementation of the 2020 police reform bill
- \$5 million for start-up costs associated with the new Peace Officer Standards & Training (POST) Commission
- \$1 million for the Supplier Diversity Office (SDO)

### ***December 2021 ARPA Bill Highlights***

- \$50 million for equitable and affordable broadband access and infrastructure improvements to close the digital divide
- \$25 million for youth-at-risk supports and grant programs for community violence prevention and re-entry organizations, focused on communities disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic
- \$37.5 million for the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund to support organizations working with people displaced from jobs during the pandemic, historically underserved populations, and individuals reentering their communities from the corrections system
- \$25 million to support tree planting programs in Gateway Cities
- \$20 million for the resettlement of Afghan evacuees and Haitian evacuees
- \$7.5 million for community colleges to train underserved populations for green jobs
- \$5 million for the Disabled Persons Protection Commission to study and review the interrelationship between service-providing agencies for individuals with disabilities within the Commonwealth and design and implement a system for an interconnected network that will provide a continuum of care

### ***April 2022 Supplemental Budget***

- \$10 million for the Office of Immigrants and Refugees (ORI) to support the resettlement of Ukrainian evacuees
- \$500,000 to build the capacity of the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women (MCSW)

### ***Fiscal Year 2022 FY22 Budget Policy Highlights***

- Establishing the Criminal Justice and Community Support Trust Fund to make grants to county and community-based jail diversion programs, as well as community policing and behavioral health training initiatives
- Repealing the asset limit for Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) and Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled, and Children (EAEDC) programs, which allow families to save for education, job training, reliable transportation, home expenses, and other emergencies
- The codification and expansion of a task force on hate crimes
- Creating a special commission to investigate and recommend strategies for reducing poverty and expanding opportunity for people with low incomes
- Extending support for immigrants who are victims of criminal activity or human trafficking
- Requiring the testing of all previously untested investigatory sexual assault evidence kits
- Allowing the pension of a police officer who dies while performing their duties in certain emergencies to be paid to their surviving spouse
- Permanently increasing the hourly compensation rates for attorneys who are appointed or assigned to represent indigent clients

# MassSenate

## Public K-12, Early & Higher Education

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### Signed into Law

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**Promoting student nutrition through increased access to school meals.** This legislation helps school districts and schools, where a majority of students are low-income, to enroll in federal programs—known as the Community Eligibility Provision and Provision 2—to provide free breakfast and lunch to all students. This bill minimizes families’ meal debt by requiring school districts to maximize federal revenues and direct the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to assist them in doing so. When students do accrue debt, it requires school districts to determine whether they are eligible for free- or reduced-price meals. Finally, this bill prohibits schools from targeting students who carry meal-related debt with punitive practices, banning so called ‘meal-shaming.’

An Act to promote student nutrition ([S.298/H3999](#))  
was signed into law on **October 14, 2021**, as **Chapter 62 of the Acts of 2021**.

**Educating students on genocide and human rights.** In response to growing concerns regarding anti-Semitic incidences in the Commonwealth, this legislation requires every middle school and high school in the Commonwealth to include instruction on the history of genocide. This bill establishes a Genocide Education Trust Fund to promote and educate middle and high school students on the history of genocide. Funds in this trust will be used for the instruction of middle and high school students on the history of genocide and to ensure the development of curricular materials, as well as to provide professional development training to assist educators in the teaching of genocide.

An Act concerning genocide education ([S.2557](#))  
was signed into law on **December 2, 2021**, as **Chapter 98 of the Acts of 2021**.

### Passed by the Senate

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**Providing students with age-appropriate, medically accurate and inclusive sex education.** This legislation requires school districts that offer sex education to follow certain guidelines to ensure students are provided with age-appropriate, medically accurate, and comprehensive information. Additionally, the bill requires reporting by school districts on the details of their sex education curricula and, to ensure that the state’s comprehensive health curriculum framework is appropriately updated, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) would also be required to review the framework at least every ten years.

An Act relative to healthy youth ([S.2541](#))  
was **passed by the Senate** on **September 23, 2021**.

## **Budget Appropriations & Additional Policy Related to Public K-12, Early & Higher Education**

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### ***Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Highlights***

- \$5.503 billion in Chapter 70 funding to Massachusetts school districts to implement the first year of the state's landmark Student Opportunity Act (SOA)
- \$820 million for the early education sector, including:
  - \$20 million to increase rates for early education providers
  - \$15 million for Massachusetts Head Start programs
  - \$10 million for the Commonwealth Preschool Partnership Initiative to expand public preschool
  - \$9 million to cover the cost of fees for parents receiving subsidized early education in calendar year 2021
- \$571 million for the University of Massachusetts system
- \$373.3 million for the Special Education Circuit Breaker, reimbursing school districts for the high cost of educating students with disabilities at the statutorily required 75% reimbursement rate
- \$350 million for the new Student Opportunity Act Investment fund to be utilized in the coming years for the implementation of the Student Opportunity Act
- \$315 million for community colleges
- \$291 million for state universities
- \$154.6 million for reimbursing school districts at 75% for costs incurred when students leave to attend charter schools
- \$130 million in scholarships
- \$82.2 million for regional school transportation
- \$50 million for Adult Basic Education
- \$40 million in reserve to provide additional aid to districts experiencing increases in student enrollment compared to October 2020
- \$27.9 million for the Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO) program
- \$10.5 million for the community college SUCCESS Fund
- \$6 million for Social Emotional Learning (SEL) grants to help K-12 schools bolster social emotional learning for students, including \$1 million for a new pilot program to provide mental health screenings for K-12 students
- \$4.75 million for the STEM Starter Academy
- \$4 million for rural school aid

### ***July 2021 Supplemental Budget Highlights***

- \$131 million for early educator stabilization grants, workforce support and technology upgrades
- \$60 million for direct grants to state-subsidized early education and childcare providers

### ***October 2021 Supplemental Budget Highlights***

\$20 million for Massachusetts approved special education schools to address the impacts of COVID-19

### ***December 2021 ARPA Bill Highlights***

- \$100 million to improve indoor air quality in schools and support healthy learning environments for public school districts with high concentrations of low-income students, English language learners, and communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19
- \$75 million for capital and maintenance projects for higher education
- \$25 million for the Endowment Incentive Program at the University of Massachusetts, state universities and community colleges
- \$25 million for youth summer and school-year jobs
- \$20 million for special education, including \$10 million for workforce development
- \$10 million for programs focused on recruiting and retaining educators of color

***April 2022 Supplemental Budget Highlights***

\$140 million for Special Education schools operating under Chapter 766 to fill immediate staffing needs

***Fiscal Year 2022 FY22 Budget Policy Highlights***

- Establishing a task force to analyze the long-term affordability of higher education in the Commonwealth and its impacts on the spectrum of higher education institutions
- Extending the priority deadline for the MassGrant scholarship program, giving applicants more time to apply
- Requiring that the Federal Funds Reporting website includes school spending of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) fund allocations
- Directing the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to conduct a study to evaluate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the delivery of educational services and supports to marginalized students
- Establishing a special legislative commission on school-based health centers and a task force on the affordability of higher education



# MassSenate

## Mental Health, Public Health & Health Care

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### Passed by the Senate

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**Addressing barriers to care through the Mental Health ABC Act 2.0.** Based on the recognition that mental health is as important as physical health, this bill proposes a wide variety of reforms to provide patients with equitable access to mental health care and remove barriers to care by supporting the behavioral health workforce. This bill would mandate coverage for an annual mental health wellness exam, comparable to an annual physical, and would require an equitable rate floor for evaluation and management services that is consistent with primary care. The bill would also provide the state with better tools to implement and enforce mental health parity laws by creating a clear structure to receive and investigate parity complaints, increasing reporting and oversight requirements on insurance carriers' mental health care coverage processes and policies, and establishing reasonable penalties and alternative remedies for failure to comply with the law. MassHealth and commercial insurance companies would be required to follow a uniform set of criteria, established by mental health experts, for determining medical necessity. Additional issues addressed in this legislation include the state's emergency department boarding crisis, emergency service programs, cultural competency in care, a newly created standard release form for patients, and care in geographically isolated areas.

An Act addressing barriers to care for mental health ([S.2572](#))  
was **passed by the Senate** on **November 17, 2021**.

**Ensuring that life-saving medications are affordable, fairly priced and accessible for all consumers through the PACT Act 2022.** The PACT Act 2022 directs the Health Policy Commission (HPC), in consultation with stakeholders, to establish a process for identifying drug price thresholds that pose a public health risk. In addition, it allows the HPC to recommend pricing measures to increase patient access to necessary medications. Drug manufacturers that fail to comply with this process will be required to pay a fee that will go into a trust fund for a new drug cost assistance program to support patients with certain chronic health conditions that disproportionately impact marginalized communities. The PACT Act 2022 also limits out-of-pocket spending on insulin by eliminating deductibles and coinsurance, and permanently capping co-pays at \$25 per 30-day supply. If the PACT Act 2022 is signed into law, Massachusetts would join 21 other states that cap co-pays for insulin.

An Act relative to pharmaceutical access, costs and transparency ([S.2695](#))  
was **passed by the Senate** on **February 15, 2021**.

**Providing free menstrual products in public places.** The legislation provides for free menstrual products in certain public places, including schools, correctional facilities, and shelters and other temporary housing. Menstrual products would be required to be provided to recipients at no cost and in a convenient and non-stigmatizing way.

An Act relative to expanding equitable access to maternal postpartum care ([S.1381](#))  
was **passed by the Senate** on **March 3, 2021**.

**Addressing the crisis in maternal health outcomes.** This legislation ensures that postpartum mothers and birthing people get necessary and potentially life-saving health care by extending MassHealth insurance coverage to 12 months after the end of pregnancy. The Secretary of the Executive Office of Health and Human Services would be directed to maximize federal financial participation for coverage and benefits of eligible pregnant and postpartum residents.

*An Act relative to expanding equitable access to maternal postpartum care ([S.2731](#)) was passed by the Senate on March 3, 2021.*

## **Budget Appropriations & Additional Policy Related to Mental Health, Public Health & Health Care**

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### ***Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Highlights***

- \$18.98 billion for MassHealth, providing over 2 million of the Commonwealth's children, seniors, and low-income residents access to comprehensive health care coverage
- \$175.6 million for substance use disorder and intervention services provided by the Bureau of Substance Addiction Services
- \$98.4 million for children's mental health services, including \$3.9 million for the Massachusetts Child Psychiatric Access Program (MCPAP) and MCPAP for Moms to address mental health needs of pregnant and postpartum women
- \$56.1 million for domestic violence prevention services
- \$40.8 million for early intervention services, to ensure supports is available to infants and young toddlers with developmental delays and disabilities, including funds to support health equity initiatives
- \$12.5 million to support a student telebehavioral health pilot, public awareness campaigns, loan forgiveness for mental health clinicians, and initiatives to mitigate emergency department boardings for individuals in need of behavioral health support
- \$10 million for Programs of Assertive Community Treatment (PACT) grants to provide intensive, community-based behavioral health services for adolescents
- \$5 million for a loan forgiveness program for mental health professionals
- \$3 million for a pediatric chronic rehabilitation long-term care hospital, to compensate for high-complexity pediatric care
- \$3 million for a loan repayment assistance program for child and adolescent psychiatrists at community health centers
- \$2.5 million to address the emergency department behavioral health boarding crisis through staffing investments and rate incentives associated with fully operationalizing inpatient mental health acute care beds

### ***July 2021 Supplemental Budget Highlights***

- \$31.9 million for the Medical Assistance Trust Fund
- \$7.8 million for home health aide rate increases

### ***December 2021 ARPA Bill Highlights***

- \$400 million in mental and behavioral health supports, including:
  - \$122 million for workforce loan repayment programs for behavioral health and substance use professionals
  - \$7 million for the expansion of behavioral health urgent care services at community health centers to address the behavioral health crisis
  - \$5 million to establish an online portal to facilitate the coordination of services for children, adolescents and adults who are being boarded in emergency departments who have mental and behavioral health needs

- \$300 million for the Home and Community-Based Services Federal Investment Fund to address workforce needs for those caring for vulnerable populations
- \$200.1 million to support the state's local and regional public health infrastructure
- \$50 million for nursing facilities, including \$25 million for capital support to increase the quality of patient care and \$25 million for workforce initiatives
- \$44.8 million for food security infrastructure, including:
  - \$17 million for the Greater Boston Food Bank for regional food security network improvements across the Commonwealth
  - \$5 million for the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts
  - \$2 million for the Massachusetts Food Trust Program to provide loans, grants and technical assistance in a regionally equitable manner to communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19
  - \$1.92 million for Project Bread to better connect eligible unenrolled residents with federal nutrition programs statewide
  - \$1 million for the Massachusetts Military Support Foundation, Inc. for the operation of empowerment centers and to support the distribution of food to veterans in need
- \$30 million to support a robust and diverse home health care and human service workforce through recruitment, retention, and loan forgiveness programming
- \$10 million to expand the number of inpatient psychiatric beds for youth in psychiatric crisis
- \$2 million for unreimbursed COVID-19 costs for Early Intervention (EI) providers
- \$500,000 to establish transportation services for participants in the Massachusetts Veterans' Treatment Courts

#### ***April 2022 Supplemental Budget Highlights***

- \$346 million for Home- and Community-Based Services (HCBS) to ensure that eligible Medicaid users throughout the Commonwealth receive health care and medical services in their own homes or local communities
- \$55 million to support reimbursement rates for human and social service providers doing crucial work during the pandemic
- \$24 million for the creation of new behavioral health and substance use disorder treatment beds
- \$10 million for suicide prevention and intervention services, focused on staffing and other resources at crisis centers, and the establishment of a statewide 988 suicide prevention hotline
- \$5 million for the Department of Mental Health to expand clientele housing support
- \$1.8 million for mental health services for international evacuees resettled in the Commonwealth

#### ***Year 2022 FY22 Budget Policy Highlights***

- Directing the Department of Mental Health (DMH) to post data monthly on the availability of adult and pediatric beds at inpatient continuing care facilities under the department's supervision
- Requiring the Department of Public Health (DPH) to conduct an outreach campaign about the availability of 12-month supplies of contraceptives
- Establishing a Parkinson's disease registry and associated advisory committee to determine the incidence and prevalence of Parkinson's disease in the Commonwealth
- Authorizing the Department of Revenue (DOR), with a taxpayer's consent, to share information with the Health Connector for conducting targeted outreach to uninsured residents to discuss health coverage options available through the Connector
- Directing a new commission to study and make recommendations on how the Commonwealth can respond to the use of methamphetamines

# MassSenate

## Economic Development, Job Creation & Workers' Rights

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### Passed by the Senate

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**Legalizing sports betting with strong consumer protections.** This legislation allows for in-person and online sports betting and is estimated to generate \$35 million in tax revenue annually. In addition to sports wagering being offered at existing casinos, the bill contemplates six licenses to be awarded through a competitive process to companies which promote job-growth, responsible gambling, diversity, equity and inclusion, and which have community support. Wagering would not be permitted on electronic sports, amateur sports or athletic events including high school and youth sports, Olympic-related competitions, or collegiate sports. Mindful of the harmful impacts of compulsive gambling and risks of addiction, the bill promotes responsible gambling and takes steps to protect consumers, including by prohibiting the use of a credit card to place a sports wager and establishing a compulsive gambling direct assistance program through the Department of Public Health (DPH).

An Act regulating sports wagering ([S.2844](#)) was **passed by the Senate** on **April 28, 2021**.

### Budget Appropriations Related to Economic Development, Job Creation & Workers Rights

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#### **Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Highlights**

- \$17 million for the Workforce Competitiveness Trust fund
- \$15.4 million for Career Technical Institutes
- \$15 million for the Community Empowerment and Reinvestment Grant Program
- \$13 million for a trust fund dedicated to job training for the offshore wind industry, to be administered by the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (CEC) to establish and grow technical training programs in public higher education and vocational-technical institutions, prioritizing grants and scholarships to adult learning providers, labor organizations, and public educational institutions
- \$9.5 million for one-stop career centers
- \$6 million for Regional Economic Development Organizations (REDOs) to support economic growth in all regions of the state
- \$2.5 million for the Massachusetts Cybersecurity Innovation Fund, including \$1.5 million for new regional security operation centers, which will partner with community colleges and state universities to provide cybersecurity workforce training to students and cybersecurity services to municipalities, non-profits, and small businesses

#### **July 2021 Supplemental Budget Highlights**

\$1 million for the Supplier Diversity Office

#### **October 2021 Supplemental Budget Highlights**

\$251.5 million for collective bargaining and labor-related costs

### ***December 2021 ARPA Bill Highlights***

- \$500 million for premium pay bonuses for essential workers
- \$500 million for the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund, providing necessary relief to business
- \$100 million for vocational school infrastructure and capacity building needs
- \$135 million for the Massachusetts Cultural Council to support the cultural sector
- \$75 million for small businesses, including:
  - \$50 million for direct grants to historically underserved populations and minority-owned, women-owned, and veteran-owned small businesses
  - \$25 million for nascent businesses
- \$25 million for the expansion of Career Technical Institutes
- \$24.5 million for workforce development and capital assistance grants to the Massachusetts Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs and the Alliance of Massachusetts YMCAs, as well \$4.5 million for the YWCAs
- \$20 million for the resettlement of Afghan evacuees and Haitian evacuees
- \$15 million for regional high-demand workforce training at community colleges
- \$15 million to enhance and diversify the cybersecurity sector with partnerships between public higher education institutions and private businesses
- \$14 million for agricultural economy supports
- \$10 million for regional tourism councils

### ***February 2022 Supplemental Budget Highlights***

\$25 million to replenish the State's Emergency COVID Paid Sick Leave Program

### ***Fiscal Year 2022 FY22 Budget Policy Highlights***

- Permanently extending the film tax credit and increasing requirements related to production expenses and principal photography days in the Commonwealth
- Extending several tax credits to those who have been particularly hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, including an optional pass-through entity excise, which is expected to generate \$90 million in new revenue while saving businesses money and federal income tax relief to taxpayers
- Creating a special commission to investigate and recommend strategies for reducing poverty and expanding opportunity for people with low incomes
- Establishing a special legislative commission to study auto body labor rates
- Moving the duties of the Wireless and Broadband Development Division to the Department of Telecommunications to facilitate access to high quality and reliable broadband
- Extending the tax credit for historic rehabilitation through 2027
- Making the cranberry bog tax credit available to taxpayers, rather than just business corporations
- Authorizing funds from the Massachusetts Cybersecurity Innovation Fund to be used for monitoring and detection of threat activity in order to investigate or mitigate cybersecurity incidents
- Repealing three obsolete and ineffective tax expenditures as recommended by the Tax Expenditure Review Commission (TERC)

### ***December 2021 ARPA Bill Policy Highlights***

Establishing a Broadband Innovation Fund to facilitate equitable broadband service adoption and improve digital literacy for residents experiencing economic hardship or housing instability

# MassSenate

## Children, Families & Persons with Disabilities

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### Signed into Law

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**Permitting adoption by close relatives.** This legislation allows adoption of a younger individual by that individual's brother, sister, uncle or aunt. Massachusetts was one of only two states that did not allow adoption by close relatives. This legislation allows families to stay together, ensuring a stable home environment which is a necessary component for development as well as physical and emotional health.

An Act expanding access to adoption ([S.2616](#))  
was signed into law on **April 4, 2022**, as **Chapter 44 of the Acts of 2022**.

### Budget Appropriations & Additional Policy Related to Children, Families & Persons with Disabilities

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#### Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Highlights

- \$30.5 million for Emergency Food Assistance to ensure that citizens in need can navigate the historic levels of food insecurity caused by COVID-19
- \$25 million for Family Resource Centers (FRCs) to grow and improve the mental health resources and programming available to families
- \$22 million for the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition Program
- \$16 million for converting the existing tax deductions for young children, elderly or disabled dependents and business-related dependent care expenses into refundable tax credits, providing an average of \$190 to over 85,000 low-income families every year
- \$7.5 million for grants to Community Foundations to support communities disproportionately impacted by the pandemic
- \$5 million for the Secure Jobs Connect program, providing job placement resources and assistance for homeless individuals
- \$4.2 million for the Office of the Child Advocate (OCA), including \$1 million for the establishment and operation of a state center on child wellness and trauma
- \$2.5 million for Children Advocacy Centers

#### July 2021 Supplemental Budget Highlights

- \$191 million for early educator stabilization grants, workforce supports and technology upgrades
- \$27.9 million for one-time payments to families that receive Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) benefits, totaling \$525 to \$580 per child

#### October 2021 Supplemental Budget Highlights

- \$20 million for Massachusetts approved special education schools to address the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic

### ***December 2021 ARPA Bill Highlights***

- \$10 million to expand the number of inpatient psychiatric beds for youth in psychiatric crisis
- \$5 million to establish an online portal to facilitate the coordination of services for children, adolescents and adults who are being boarded in emergency departments who have mental and behavioral health needs
- \$1 million to the Committee for Public Counsel Services (CPCS) for the Children and Family Law program to increase staffing to meet pandemic-related demand

### ***February 2022 Supplemental Budget Highlights***

- \$5 million for increasing vaccination rates among five through eleven-year-olds
- \$25 million for the state to purchase and distribute high-quality masks in Massachusetts, with priority given to education and health care workers

### ***April 2022 Supplemental Budget Highlights***

- \$55 million to support reimbursement rates for human and social service providers doing crucial work during the pandemic
- \$10 million for Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled and Children (EAEDC)
- \$8.4 million for Department of Children and Families foster family rates
- \$8 million for Early Intervention (EI) staff stabilization support

### ***Fiscal Year 2022 FY22 Budget Policy Highlights***

- Converting the existing tax deductions for young children, elderly or dependents with disabilities and business-related dependent care expenses into refundable tax credits
- Repealing the asset limits for Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) and Emergency Aid to the Elderly, Disabled and Children (EAEDC), and increasing TAFDC and EAEDC benefits by 20 per cent over December 2020 levels, to assist families in saving for education, job training, reliable transportation, home expenses, and other emergencies
- Creating a disability employment tax credit for employers that hire employees with disabilities

# MassSenate

## Housing & Support for Individuals Experiencing Homelessness

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### Passed by the Senate

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***Extending support to individuals experiencing homelessness by providing free IDs.*** This legislation waives fees and documentation requirements, including proof of residence, for individuals experiencing homelessness applying for state-issued identification (ID) cards. In lieu of proof of residency, the bill would allow such an ID applicant to meet requirements by presenting documentation that is from an entity providing services in the Commonwealth, such as a homeless shelter, or that shows that the applicant is receiving services provided by the Commonwealth.

*An Act to provide identification to homeless youth and families ([S.2576](#)) was passed by the Senate on February 27, 2021.*

### Budget Appropriations & Additional Policy Related to Housing

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#### ***Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Highlights***

- \$197 million for the Emergency Assistance family shelter system
- \$151 million for the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program
- \$85 million for grants to local housing authorities
- \$26 million for the HomeBase short-term housing assistance program
- \$22 million for the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition Program, which provides eligible families with funds that they can use to keep their housing or obtain new housing
- \$12.5 million for rental subsidies through the Department of Mental Health (DMH)
- \$9.6 million for grants to reduce recidivism by providing transitional housing, workforce development and case management to individuals returning to the community from county correctional facilities and state prisons
- \$8 million for Housing Consumer Education Centers to administer nearly \$1 billion in federal housing relief
- \$8 million for housing and supportive services for unaccompanied youth
- \$7.5 million for a community empowerment and reinvestment grant program to support communities disproportionately impacted by the criminal justice system, including through programs focused on housing stabilization services
- \$5 million for the Secure Jobs Connect program for employment support, job training and job search services for homeless or previously homeless families receiving assistance

#### ***October 2021 Supplemental Budget Highlights***

- \$16.8 million for shelter services for individuals experiencing homelessness
- \$5 million for permanent supportive housing units



### ***December 2021 ARPA Bill Highlights***

- \$150 million for public housing authorities to maintain and upgrade existing infrastructure
- \$150 million for supportive housing, including \$65 million for the chronically homeless population
- \$115 million for the Commonwealth Builder Program to support housing production and promote homeownership among residents of disproportionately impacted communities
- \$115 million for affordable rental housing production and preservation for the workforce and low- and moderate-income individuals
- \$65 million for homeownership assistance tools, including down payment assistance, and mortgage interest subsidy supports

### ***April 2022 Supplemental Budget Highlights***

- \$100 million for the Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) program, which provides eligible families with funds that they can use to keep their housing or obtain new housing
- \$20 million to the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which provides crucial assistance to families facing high utility bills
- \$2.8 million for rates at shelters for homeless individuals

### ***April 2022 Supplemental Budget Policy Highlights***

- Extending through March 2023 several protections for tenants experiencing COVID-19-related financial hardship, including the requirement that a court grant a continuance in an eviction case for nonpayment of rent when the tenant has a pending rental assistance application
- Ensuring that down payment assistance funds received from the Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency or the Massachusetts Housing Partnership will not be considered taxable income

# MassSenate

## Environmental Protection

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### Signed into Law

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***Creating a next generation roadmap for climate change.*** This nation-leading climate legislation, known as the Next Generation Climate Roadmap bill, overhauls the state's climate laws, reduces greenhouse gas emissions, advances the clean energy industry, and prioritizes environmental justice. It sets a course towards net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 with statewide limits every five-year period. To achieve this goal, the legislation increases the requirements for offshore wind energy procurement, bringing the statewide total to 5,600 megawatts, requires emission reduction goals for MassSave, the state's energy efficiency program and, for the first time, establishes the criteria in statute that define environmental justice populations. The legislation also increases support for clean energy workforce development programs including those targeting low-income communities and improves gas pipeline safety.

*An Act creating a next-generation roadmap for Massachusetts climate policy ([S.9](#)) was signed into law on **March 26, 2021**, as **Chapter 8 of the Acts of 2021**.*

### Passed by the Senate

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***Driving climate policy forward by promoting clean energy, electric vehicles and green buildings.*** The Drive Act increases investments in the state's clean energy infrastructure, builds and improves upon existing incentives for homeowners, renters, and consumers to reduce their carbon footprints, and reduces emissions from the building and transportation sectors. To support the Commonwealth's goal of reaching net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, this legislation bolsters cutting edge clean energy technologies, updates the offshore wind procurement process and paves the way for 10,000 megawatts of offshore wind, and supports the advancement of solar power. It also incentivizes consumer adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) by providing a \$3,500 rebate for certain EV purchasers or \$4,500 if trading in a combustion engine vehicle, sets targets for electrifying the MBTA bus and commuter rail fleet and builds up the EV charging infrastructure across the state. Finally, it addresses issues regarding building emissions by increasing data reporting and creating a pilot program for communities to go all-electric for new construction and removes biomass facilities from the state's clean energy incentive programs.

*An Act Driving Climate Policy Forward ([S.2842](#)) was **passed by the Senate** on **April 14, 2021***

***Preserving open spaces in the Commonwealth.*** This legislation would prevent the loss of natural resource lands that are covered under Article 97 of the Massachusetts constitution. The bill requires that any municipality or state agency that is disposing or changing the use of any Article 97 protected open space must replace that land with comparable land, which would protect open spaces across Massachusetts.

*An Act preserving open spaces in the Commonwealth ([S.2831](#)) was **passed by the Senate** on **April 14, 2021***

**Requiring insurance coverage of home heating oil spills.** This legislation requires that all homeowner insurance policies cover a potential home heating oil spill, in line with existing policies which require homeowner insurance to cover other common potential risks, such as natural gas line explosions. Every year, over one hundred homeowners report to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) an oil spill associated with a home heating oil tank, and spills can cost anywhere from tens of thousands to millions of dollars to clean up, causing a potential financial crisis for a family. This legislation would help to prevent families from having to pay for the cleanup of home heating oil spills by themselves.

*An Act relative to the remediation of home heating oil releases ([S.2830](#))  
was **passed by the Senate** on **April 14, 2021***

## **Budget Appropriations & Additional Policy Related to Environmental Protection**

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### ***Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Highlights***

- \$50.5 million for the division of state parks and recreation
- \$33.4 million for the operation of the department of environmental protection
- \$25 million for upkeep and improvements to state parks and recreation sites
- \$13.5 million for the operation of the office of the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs
- \$13 million for a trust fund to grow technical training programs for the offshore wind industry in public higher education and vocational-technical institutions, prioritizing grants and scholarships to adult learning providers, labor organizations, and public educational institutions
- \$2.2 million for the Department of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) to coordinate and implement strategies for climate change adaptation and preparedness

### ***December 2021 ARPA Bill Highlights***

- \$100 million for water and sewer infrastructure investments through the Clean Water Trust
- \$100 million for environmental infrastructure grants, including the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program
- \$90 million for marine port infrastructure investments focused on the promotion of offshore wind development
- \$25 million for a program to support tree planting in Gateway Cities
- \$15 million for parks and recreational assets
- \$7.5 million for community colleges to help train underserved populations for green jobs
- \$6.5 million for clean energy retrofitting in affordable housing units
- \$5 million for the advancement of geothermal technologies

### ***April 2022 Supplemental Budget Highlights***

- \$1.7 million for state park investments, including water safety initiatives
- \$609,000 for additional staffing to implement the Next Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy legislation

### ***Fiscal Year 2022 FY22 Budget Policy Highlights***

- Establishing the Offshore Wind Energy Career Training Trust Fund to provide grants to public higher education institutions to develop and adopt training programs for careers in the offshore wind energy industry
- Establishing a shellfish advisory panel within the division of marine fisheries to advise on matters of concern relevant to shellfish fisheries

# MassSenate

## Transportation

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### Signed into Law

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**Funding municipal roads, bridges, green infrastructure, and transit through Chapter 90 grants.** This legislation authorizes \$200 million for municipal roads and bridges through the chapter 90 program and \$150 million to support statewide projects to address congestion, support electric vehicle infrastructure, prioritize bus infrastructure, and improve public transit. The bill includes authorizations for the following:

- \$200 million in chapter 90 funding for cities and towns
- \$25 million for the Municipal Small Bridge Program
- \$25 million for the Local Bottleneck Program
- \$25 million for Electric Vehicle (EV) infrastructure
- \$25 million for Transit-Supportive Infrastructure
- \$25 million for Bus Prioritization and Enhancement Projects
- \$25 million for Enhancements at Transit and Commuter Rail Stations

An Act financing improvements to municipal roads and bridges ([S.2486/H.3903](#)) was signed into law on **July 16, 2021**, as **Chapter 25 of the Acts of 2021**.

### Budget Appropriations & Additional Policy Related to Transportation

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#### **Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Highlight**

- \$403 million for the Massachusetts Transportation Trust Fund for various transportation-related needs around the Commonwealth
- \$127 million for the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA)
- \$125 million for the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority (MTA)
- \$94 million for regional transit authorities (RTAs)

#### **April 2022 Supplemental Budget Highlight**

\$100 million for a new Winter Road Recovery Assistance Program for cities and towns to repair potholes and roads and bridges worn down by adverse weather conditions

#### **Fiscal Year 2022 FY22 Budget Policy Highlights**

- Allowing for Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds to be used to acquire land for recreational rail trails
- Prohibiting the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) from collecting any charge or fee for parking on land under DCR's jurisdictional care without prior approval from local authorities
- Establishing a task force to study the non-emergency human service transportation system
- Creating a special commission to study auto body labor rates

#### **July 2021 Supplemental Budget Policy Highlights**

Establishing a new seven-member Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) Board of Directors to take the place of the Fiscal Management and Control Board

# MassSenate

## Election Safety, Integrity & Access

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### Signed into Law

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***Extending early voting by mail and allowing municipalities flexibility around municipal caucuses and elections.*** This legislation extends voting-by-mail provisions through the end of June 2021 and allows municipalities to temporarily cancel or postpone municipal caucuses and postpone municipal elections.

*An Act further providing for early voting by mail ([S.28/H.73](#))*  
was signed into law on **March 16, 2021**, as **Chapter 5 of the Acts of 2021**.

***Extending early voting by mail, early in-person voting and absentee voting.*** This legislation extends early voting-by-mail provisions and early in-person voting for state and local elections through December 15, 2021. Additionally, this legislation recognizes COVID-19 precautions as a valid reason for absentee voting in state and local elections through December 15, 2021.

*An Act making appropriations for fiscal year 2021 to provide for supplementing certain existing appropriations and for certain other activities and projects ([H.3973](#))*  
was signed into law on **July 21, 2021**, as **Chapter 29 of the Acts of 2021**.

***Establishing districts in the Massachusetts House of Representatives until 2030.*** This bill divides the Commonwealth into 160 representative districts, based on data from the 2020 census, that will be in effect until the next redistricting cycle following the decennial census in 2030.

*An Act relative to establishing representative districts in the General Court ([H.4217](#))*  
was signed into law on **November 4, 2021**, as **Chapter 83 of the Acts of 2021**.

***Establishing districts in the Massachusetts Senate until 2030.*** This bill divides the Commonwealth into 40 senatorial districts, based on data from the 2020 census, that will be in effect until the next redistricting cycle following the decennial census in 2030. This bill, and the redistricting map it describes, doubles the number of majority-minority Senate districts from three to six. The Special Joint Committee on Redistricting sought broad public input, holding 19 public hearings, including in nine different languages. The Committee also held numerous meetings with advocates and legislators and maintained a website with case law, statistics, and ultimately, draft and final maps.

*An Act establishing senatorial districts ([S.2563](#))*  
was signed into law on **November 5, 2021**, as **Chapter 82 of the Acts of 2021**.

***Establishing Congressional districts in the United States House of Representatives until 2030.*** This bill divides the Commonwealth into nine Congressional districts, based on data from the 2020 census, that will be in effect until the next redistricting cycle following the decennial census in 2030.

*An Act establishing Congressional districts ([H.4256](#))*  
was signed into law on **November 22, 2021**, as **Chapter 93 of the Acts of 2021**.

***Establishing councillor districts for the Governor’s Council in Massachusetts until 2030.*** This bill divides the Commonwealth into eight councillor districts, based on data from the 2020 census, that will be in effect until the next redistricting cycle following the decennial census in 2030.

An Act establishing councillor districts ([H.4257](#))  
was signed into law on **November 22, 2021**, as **Chapter 93 of the Acts of 2021**.

## **Passed by the Senate**

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***Fostering voting opportunities, trust, equity and security through the VOTES Act.*** This comprehensive voting reform bill permanently codifies the popular mail-in and early voting options used in the 2020 election in Massachusetts. The bill also establishes same-day voter registration and increases ballot access for service members serving overseas, people with disabilities and incarcerated individuals who are legally allowed to vote, in addition to other improvements to the Commonwealth’s election administration process.

An Act fostering voter opportunities, trust, equity and security ([S.2554](#))  
was **passed by the Senate on October 6, 2021**.

## **Budget Appropriations & Additional Policy Related to Election Safety and Integrity**

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### ***Fiscal Year 2022 Budget Highlights***

\$7.5 million for the operation of the Elections Division the Secretary of the Commonwealth

### ***April 2022 Supplemental Budget Highlights***

\$5 million for state election costs

### ***July 2021 Supplemental Budget Policy Highlights***

- Allowing the popular practice of voting early by mail to continue through December 15, 2021, giving eligible voters the ability to exercise their right to cast a ballot while protecting their health and safety
- Allowing cities and towns the ability to offer early in-person voting for such elections.

# MassSenate

## Animal Welfare

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### Signed into Law

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***Creating a more secure egg supply chain and raising Massachusetts' farm animal welfare standards to align with other states.*** The legislation upgrades Massachusetts' egg production law—which resulted from the 2016 ballot question, *An Act to prevent cruelty to farm animals* (Question 3)— to create predictability and certainty by mirroring the even stronger national United Egg Producers cage-free guidelines, which have been adopted by leading retailers, producers, and other states.

*An Act further regulating hen welfare and establishing uniform cage-free standards* ([S.2603](#)) was signed into law on **December 22, 2021**, as **Chapter 108 of the Acts of 2021**.

***Allowing humane transportation of K9 partners through Nero's law.*** This legislation authorizes emergency medical service personnel to provide emergency treatment and transport of law enforcement officers' K9 partners injured in the line of duty, so long as there are no humans needing transport or ambulance services. This includes basic first aid, CPR, and administering life-saving interventions such as naloxone.

*An Act allowing humane transportation of K9 partners aka Nero's law* ([S.2573](#)) was **passed by the Senate** on November 10, 2021.