



MASSACHUSETTS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

2005-2006

HEALTH CARE

- ✓ **HEALTH CARE REFORM**
CHAPTER 58 OF THE ACTS OF 2006
First-in-the-nation health care reform law makes affordable, quality insurance accessible to 95% of the state's 500,000 uninsured residents within three years; Landmark law based on House principle of shared responsibility requires individuals, businesses and government to participate in remedy for skyrocketing costs and growing number of uninsured; Reforms promise to significantly lower insurance costs for working families and individuals

- ✓ **GIVING SENIORS GREATER LONG-TERM CARE CHOICES**
ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE
Redirects Medicaid spending to give more seniors and people with disabilities option of receiving care at home and in the community; Moving to preferred, cost effective settings will save state taxpayers \$134 million in first five years and create greater awareness of community-based alternatives

- ✓ **GENETIC PRIVACY ACT**
CHAPTER 147 OF THE ACTS OF 2005
Protects Commonwealth's citizens by prohibiting insurance providers from discriminating against prospective policy holders based upon genetic testing results

- ✓ **PHARMACY ACCESS**
CHAPTER 172 OF THE ACTS OF 2006
Public health measure allows over-the-counter sales of hypodermic needles in effort to dramatically reduce the transmission of AIDS and Hepatitis C and bring Massachusetts in line with 47 other states that have passed similar laws

- ✓ **CAREGIVER REGISTRY**
ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE
New statewide registry of personal care attendants will expand access to quality home care, allowing more seniors and people with disabilities to maintain their independence in setting where they're most comfortable; Directs consumer council to oversee management of directory, create backup system of qualified caregivers and recruit and train personal care attendants

- ✓ **EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION**
CHAPTER 91 OF THE ACTS OF 2005
Law allows for timely access to emergency contraception by requiring hospitals to offer medication to rape victims and permitting pharmacists to dispense the medication in consultation with a physician

- ✓ **LICENSING OF GENETIC COUNSELORS**
CHAPTER 170 OF THE ACTS OF 2006
New registration and licensing requirements for genetic counselors guarantees appropriate state oversight and patient protections in emerging medical field

- ✓ **IMPROVING HOSPITAL PATIENT SAFETY**
H.4988 – ENGROSSED BY THE HOUSE
House-approved bill ensures a baseline level of quality care for hospital patients by directing the Department of Public Health to study nursing care in the Commonwealth in effort to establish safe nurse staffing standards; Measure also invests more resources in the state's nursing workforce

- ✓ **BLADDER CANCER SCREENING PROGRAM**
H.1636 – ENGROSSED BY THE HOUSE
Acknowledging that occupational exposure to hazardous materials makes professional and volunteer firefighters more prone to incidences of bladder cancer, legislation directs Department of Public Health to provide testing & screening and conduct educational program to encourage awareness and prevention

✓ **SEXUAL ASSAULT NURSE EXAMINERS (SANE)**

H.878 – ENGROSSED BY THE HOUSE

Ensures that all SANE operations are consistent and professionally sound by establishing a uniform standard of training and standardized method for collecting forensic evidence, providing care to sexual assault victims and guaranteeing that every effort is made to bring sexual perpetrators to justice; Establishes an advisory board to provide oversight and review future SANE operations changes

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

✓ **ECONOMIC STIMULUS PACKAGE**

CHAPTER 123 OF THE ACTS OF 2006

Following statewide job growth listening tour, House passes comprehensive stimulus package designed to make smart, bold investments in workforce training, infrastructure, technology and cultural facilities

- \$30 million for Brownfields Redevelopment Fund
- \$50 million for Historical Rehabilitation Tax Credit
- \$10 million to spur activity in the state's life sciences and technology sector
- \$13 million for establishment of first-in-the-nation Cultural Facilities Fund; Annual appropriation will attract hundreds of millions of dollars in private investments
- \$23 million for workforce development and training programs
- \$100 million bond program for infrastructure improvements that encourage economic development

✓ **STEM CELL RESEARCH**

CHAPTER 27 OF THE ACTS OF 2005

Despite objections of the Governor, Legislature enacts groundbreaking legislation to establish Massachusetts as a center for cutting edge, life-saving research with appropriate regulatory oversight

- ✓ **STREAMLINED PERMITTING**
ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE
House combats the excessive regulation and red tape that impede economic development and job growth in the Commonwealth by approving legislation to streamline the state and local building approval process
 - Provides technical and marketing assistance to communities that set 180-day permitting timeframe
 - Additional funding to assist Division of Administrative Law Appeals expedite decisions on development disputes and meet new requirement to issue decisions within 90 days of a hearing
 - Creates new division of the state's Land Court to focus exclusively on land use and environmental permit disputes

- ✓ **RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE**
ENACTED INTO LAW OVER THE GOVERNOR'S VETO
Legislature reaffirms commitment to Commonwealth's working families by giving long overdue pay increase to lowest wage earners; First increase since 2001 raises rate to \$7.50 in 2007 and \$8.00 in 2008, giving Massachusetts one of the most competitive minimum wages in the country

- ✓ **BRINGING BRISTOL-MYERS SQUIBB TO MASSACHUSETTS**
CHAPTER 173 OF THE ACTS OF 2006
Beating out competitor states like North Carolina and New York, bipartisan Massachusetts effort persuades global drug giant Bristol-Myers Squibb to build a \$660 million manufacturing plant at Devens; Company will create hundreds of high-paying jobs and produce ripple effect through economy as more life sciences companies choose to set up shop in the Commonwealth

- ✓ **INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT INCENTIVE**
H.5253 – ENGROSSED BY THE HOUSE
New financing mechanism forges partnership between communities, state and developers in order to stimulate development and job growth across Massachusetts; Authorizes Massachusetts Development Finance Agency to sell bonds for public infrastructure improvements related to economic development projects; Income tax revenue generated from resulting new jobs would pay off bonds

- ✓ **FILM TAX INCENTIVES**
CHAPTER 158 OF THE ACTS OF 2005
Seeking to further facilitate job growth and make Massachusetts competitive with other states and countries, House takes action to attract multi-billion dollar movie industry to Massachusetts to create jobs, increase tourism and generate revenue for state and local economies

- ✓ **MILITARY BASE PROTECTION & DEVELOPMENT**
CHAPTER 4 OF THE ACTS OF 2005
\$261 million plan to expand and renovate Hanscom Air Force Base in Bedford and US Army Soldiers System in Natick keeps jobs in Massachusetts and bases open during 2005 BRAC review process

- ✓ **STRENGTHENING CHILD LABOR LAWS**
AWAITING FINAL ENACTMENT
Legislature approves first comprehensive overhaul of child labor rules in 70 years by increasing criminal penalties and giving the attorney general authority to pursue civil charges against negligent employers; Law requires adult supervision of younger workers after 8 p.m., summarizes the statute on work permits and permit applications and bars teens from carrying a firearm at work

- ✓ **DISPOSITION OF SURPLUS STATE LAND**
AWAITING FINAL ENACTMENT
House passes comprehensive legislation that restructures the process for the disposal of surplus state property; Bill offers municipalities and non-profits the opportunity to purchase the property at a discount and provides incentives for job growth and job creation on state-owned parcels

BALANCED, FAIR, ON-TIME BUDGETS

- ✓ **FY'07 BUDGET – UNPRECEDENTED LEVEL OF LOCAL AID**
CHAPTER 139 OF THE ACTS OF 2006
Moving to ease property tax burdens and help municipalities fund essential services, House uncaps lottery aid and directs \$920 million in lottery funding to partners in local government; Total non-education local aid stands at \$1.37 billion, exceeds pre-recession levels and represents highest amount of local aid ever distributed to the Commonwealth's 351 cities and towns

- ✓ **FY'07 BUDGET – HISTORIC CHAPTER 70 FUNDING**
CHAPTER 139 OF THE ACTS OF 2006
Budget increases education aid by \$216.6 million, millions more than originally proposed by the Governor, bringing total Chapter 70 statewide funding to \$3.5 billion; Fair and equitable distribution will help school districts recover from cuts implemented when state revenues plummeted in 2002

- ✓ **FY'06 BUDGET**
CHAPTER 167 OF THE ACTS OF 2005
On-time, balanced budget increased funding for local aid, education, human services and affordable housing; Consistent with House commitment to greater public transparency and good government reforms, the spending plan restricts outside sections to those directly related to spending line items

- ✓ **FY'06 CAPITAL SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET**
CHAPTER 122 OF THE ACTS OF 2006
Following the transfer of \$691 million to Rainy Day Fund, bringing reserve account that helped state weather worst recession since Great Depression to \$1.7 billion, the House invests \$297 million in vital, long-delayed infrastructure & capital projects across the Commonwealth and on public college campuses

- ✓ **RESPONDING TO DISASTER: HURRICANE KATRINA EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION**
CHAPTER 81 OF THE ACTS OF 2005
"Operation Helping Hand" designed to provide Hurricane Katrina evacuees being temporarily housed at Camp Edwards on Cape Cod. The Legislature responds with \$25 Million in emergency appropriation for medical, housing and educational services they need to begin rebuilding their lives

BROAD-BASED TAX RELIEF

- ✓ **SENIOR "CIRCUIT BREAKER"**
CHAPTER 136 OF THE ACTS OF 2005
Eligible seniors can currently receive an annual state income tax credit of up to \$840 if their house is valued at \$400,000 or less; new law initiated by the House raises the property value threshold to \$600,000, making tens of thousands of additional seniors across the Commonwealth eligible for tax relief

- ✓ **SALES TAX HOLIDAYS**
CHAPTER 52 OF THE ACTS OF 2005 & H.5200 AWAITING ACTION BY THE GOVERNOR
For third consecutive year, House overwhelmingly passes legislation to give shoppers a two-day August sales tax break and provide a shot-in-the-arm to retailers and the economy

- ✓ **COMMUTER TAX BREAK**
CHAPTER 139 OF THE ACTS OF 2006
Income tax deduction for eligible Fast Lane toll payers and MBTA monthly pass holders becomes permanent, allowing commuters to deduct up to \$750 a year every year

- ✓ **MWRA RATE RELIEF**
CHAPTER 139 OF THE ACTS OF 2006
\$25 million appropriation to the Sewer Rate Relief Fund helps contain costs for water and sewer ratepayers throughout Massachusetts

- ✓ **H.E.A.T – HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE & TAX RELIEF ACT**
CHAPTER 140 OF THE ACTS OF 2005
In a proactive response to skyrocketing energy costs and winter heating bills, the House offers tax deductions on home heating bills, tax credits to promote purchase of energy efficient residential items and \$20 million in heating assistance for low-income individuals and families

- ✓ **REPEAL OF RETROACTIVE CAPITAL GAINS TAX**
CHAPTER 163 OF THE ACTS OF 2005
Responding to unintended consequence of court ruling, House moves effective date of capital gains tax increase to January 1, 2003, saving 48,000 taxpayers from paying retroactive taxes and sending rebates to tens of thousands more residents assessed on assets sold between May and December 2002

PUBLIC SAFETY

- ✓ **WITNESS INTIMIDATION PROGRAM/ANTI-GANG FUNDING**
CHAPTER 48 OF THE ACTS OF 2006
Moving to combat rising crime rates, House establishes \$11 million grant program to help communities reduce and prevent gang violence and strengthens existing gun laws; Creates \$1.5 million statewide witness protection program to safeguard witnesses from the intimidation that obstructs criminal investigations

- ✓ **OUI REPEAT OFFENDERS (“MELANIE’S LAW”)**
CHAPTER 122 OF THE ACTS OF 2005
Toughest drunk driving law in the Commonwealth’s history stiffens penalties for repeat offenders and brings state in compliance with federal drunk driving standards

- ✓ **NEW DRIVER'S LICENSE REQUIREMENTS FOR TEENAGERS**
AWAITING FINAL ENACTMENT
Seeking to address the dual issues of inexperience and training that contribute to teenage drivers suffering the highest fatality rate of any age group, House endorses bill to increase the required amount of on-the-road training, strengthen restrictions and penalties for junior operators and give the Registry of Motor Vehicles regulatory authority over all driver education schools and programs

- ✓ **PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL PREDATORS**
AWAITING FINAL ENACTMENT
Most sweeping sex offender legislation since the creation of the sex offender registry a decade ago nearly doubles the statute of limitations for certain sexual crimes against children, mandates pre-release classification and registration of incarcerated sex offenders and prohibits Level 3 sex offenders from residing in nursing homes

- ✓ **STRENGTHENING SEX OFFENDER OVERSIGHT**
CHAPTER 139 OF THE ACTS OF 2006
House takes action to tighten rules and strengthen oversight by placing sex offenders who repeatedly fail to register with the state's sex offender board on lifetime parole, subjecting offenders who commit certain crimes against children to lifetime parole if they fail to register even once and requiring sex offenders to register at all address where they spend more than two weeks a year

- ✓ **SUPPORT FOR MUNICIPAL PUBLIC SAFETY**
CHAPTER 139 OF THE ACTS OF 2006
FY'07 budget sends \$21 million home to cities and towns for Community Policing grants and \$2.5 million for new municipal fire safety equipment

- ✓ **CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS ("NICOLE'S LAW")**
CHAPTER 123 OF THE ACTS OF 2005
Requires installation of inexpensive, life-saving carbon monoxide detectors in homes and residential properties to protect Massachusetts residents from leading cause of accidental poisoning deaths in the country

- ✓ **FIRE SAFE CIGARETTES**
CHAPTER 140 OF THE ACTS OF 2006
Taking aim at the leading cause of home fire deaths, law requires tobacco companies to produce and sell only self-extinguishing cigarettes or "fire-safe cigarettes" in Massachusetts; Measure helps reduce risk of fire and injury for smokers, their families, their neighbors and local firefighters

- ✓ **INTERSTATE COMPACT**
CHAPTER 121 OF THE ACTS OF 2005
Enhances public safety by allowing Massachusetts to join 49 other states in the Interstate Compact for Adult Supervision; Provides law enforcement officials the authority to track, supervise and, when necessary, return convicted criminals on parole or probation who relocate here from other states

- ✓ **PUBLIC DEFENDERS**
CHAPTER 54 OF THE ACTS OF 2005
Responding to growing crisis in the courts, House approves higher salary rates for private attorneys who represent the indigent and implements cost-saving reform system by lowering cap on hours billed to taxpayers; Creates pilot project to utilize public defenders in district courts to lower costs paid for representation of indigent defendants

- ✓ **VOLUNTARY FIREFIGHTER & PUBLIC SAFETY PERSONNEL BENEFITS**
CHAPTER 125 OF THE ACTS OF 2005
In order to protect and provide for all safety personnel across the Commonwealth, the House requires cities and towns to provide death benefits for families of public safety personnel killed in the line of duty

- ✓ **EMERGENCY CENTRAL ARTERY LEGISLATION**
CHAPTER 153 OF THE ACTS OF 2006
Moving to restore public safety and confidence after fatal Big Dig tunnel ceiling collapse, legislators swiftly approve legislation granting Governor responsibility for inspections and funding to conduct “stem to stern” audit of entire project

- ✓ **PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM SEXUAL SOLICITATION**
H.859 – ENGROSSED BY HOUSE
Closing loophole in current law, measure strengthens penalties for soliciting sexual contact for a fee with a minor under 14

EDUCATION

- ✓ **UNIVERSAL PRE-KINDERGARTEN PROGRAM**
ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE
Delivering on a promise to provide high-quality early education to the Commonwealth's children, House creates the Massachusetts Universal Pre-Kindergarten Program and directs \$4.6 million for pilot implementation grants in FY'07 budget; the Legislature consolidated existing education programs into a new and elevated Department of Early Education and Care in 2004

- ✓ **COMMITMENT TO HIGHER EDUCATION**
CHAPTER 139 OF THE ACTS OF 2006
FY'07 budget includes a \$63.2 million, or 6.9%, increase in spending on higher education; Total funding rises to \$979 million, with a \$35 million increase for the University of Massachusetts and \$36.7 million more for state and community colleges to decrease the so-called "funding gap" and to account for collective bargaining agreements

- ✓ **INCLUSIVE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION CEREMONIES**
CHAPTER 152 OF THE ACTS OF 2006
Legislation affords good-standing special education students who fail to pass the MCAS test the opportunity to walk with their peers in graduation ceremonies

- ✓ **PROFESSIONAL TEACHING STATUS FOR SCHOOL NURSES**
ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE
Recognizing critical function school nurses serve on daily basis, House gives public school nurses professional teaching status, affording them the same due process rights as teachers under the Education Reform Act of 1993

- ✓ **FEDERAL REIMBURSEMENT FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM**
CHAPTER 107 OF THE ACTS OF 2005
Law allows Massachusetts to maximize state dollars by leveraging federal funds for critical services provided to children with autism; Medicaid waiver reimburses state for 50% of costs associated with treating children with disability more common than all childhood cancers, muscular dystrophy, juvenile diabetes and cystic fibrosis combined

- ✓ **ACCESS TO STUDENT RECORDS**
CHAPTER 62 OF THE ACTS OF 2006
Brings Massachusetts in line with federal law by giving non-custodial parents greater access to student records

HOUSING

- ✓ **HOUSING BOND BILL**
CHAPTER 53 OF THE ACTS OF 2005
As part of overall economic strategy, House took quick action on a \$200 million bond re-authorization to finance new affordable housing construction and preserve & maintain existing units

- ✓ **EDUCATION RELIEF FOR “SMART GROWTH” CITIES & TOWNS**
CHAPTER 141 OF THE ACTS OF 2005
Removes barriers and provides incentives for housing production by reimbursing communities for costs directly related to educating children living in “smart growth” developments

- ✓ **HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS FUNDING**
CHAPTER 139 OF THE ACTS OF 2006
FY’07 budget provides \$27.5 million for the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program, \$5 million for the Rental Assistance for Families in Transition program and an additional \$200,000 for the Housing Services Program to prevent at-risk families from becoming homeless

VETERANS

- ✓ **SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC EMPLOYEES ON MILITARY DUTY**
CHAPTER 77 OF THE ACTS OF 2005
Extends law protecting public employees from loss of pay, seniority & leave time if they are called to active military duty

- ✓ **WELCOME HOME BILL**
CHAPTER 130 OF THE ACTS OF 2005
Just in time for Veterans’ Day, House provides additional benefits and increased pay for service members, veterans and their families as well as education & fee waivers for Massachusetts National Guard members

- ✓ **THE ED CONNOLLY MILITARY ENHANCED RELIEF INDIVIDUAL TAX PLAN**
AWAITING FINAL ENACTMENT
Delivers relief to thousands of military families by increasing property tax abatements and exemptions for first time since 1997; Package includes new 100% five-year property tax exemption for surviving spouses and provision giving municipalities local option of suspending property tax payments due by National Guard members, Reservists or their dependants while on active duty for six months after service is complete

ENVIRONMENT

- ✓ ENERGY EFFICIENT APPLIANCES
CHAPTER 139 OF THE ACTS OF 2005
Recognizing that efficiency must be part of the solution to state's energy crisis, measure encourages the sale of more energy efficient household appliances in an effort to reduce energy consumption and cut consumer utility bills by \$1 billion over 25 years
- ✓ COMPREHENSIVE MERCURY MANAGEMENT
CHAPTER 190 OF THE ACTS OF 2006
Law phases out use of mercury-added products, establishes recycling programs and creates education program to protect public and environment from highly poisonous metal
- ✓ MODERNIZING TOXICS USE REDUCTION ACT
AWAITING FINAL ENACTMENT
House takes steps to strengthen measure credited with decreasing toxic chemical use by 38%; Revisions backed by cross-section of environmental and business groups reflect changes in state and federal statutes as well as advancements in reductions techniques

CONSUMER CHOICE & PRIVACY RIGHTS

- ✓ INTERSTATE WINE SHIPMENTS
CHAPTER 33 OF THE ACTS OF 2006
Moving to comply with Supreme Court decision, House approves bill making it easier for consumers to purchase wine directly from vineyards through the mail; also allows restaurants to re-cork bottles of wine so diners can bring them home without violating open container law
- ✓ PROTECTING DRIVERS' PRIVACY RIGHTS
H.4707 – ENGROSSED BY THE HOUSE
Requires auto manufacturers and dealers to notify buyers that their cars come equipped with devices that regularly record information about vehicle speed, steering performance and brake deployment; Ensures vehicle owners have ownership of recorded information

REAL REFORM

- ✓ NEW COMMITTEE STRUCTURE
For the first time in 38 years, House reorganizes its committee structure and jurisdictions; Modernization enables House to accomplish its ambitious legislative agenda on health care reform and economic development
- ✓ LIMITING OUTSIDE SECTIONS
House reform restores accountability and transparency to state government; Budgets that hold the line on policy-making prevent matters unrelated to spending from circumventing the legislative process and receiving appropriate levels of public scrutiny
- ✓ COMPREHENSIVE WELFARE REFORM
ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE
House helps individuals become self-sufficient and preserves federal funding by imposing new work requirements on parents, establishing a separate state program for recipients ineligible for federal benefits and creating new work incentives for the disabled

VIGOROUS, OPEN DEBATE

- ✓ DEATH PENALTY
Majority of legislators vote to reject Governor's so-called "gold standard" capital punishment bill
- ✓ IN-STATE TUITION
After more than six hours of passionate debate, House votes against allowing children of undocumented immigrants to pay in-state tuition rates at state colleges
- ✓ PRIMARY SEATBELTS
House debates merits of legislation making failure to buckle-up a primary offense; Legislators contemplate critical issues of public safety, civil liberties, public health and racial profiling during debate
- ✓ PUBLIC CHARITIES FINANCIAL DISCLOSURES
Representatives weigh the merits, and eventually reject, bill to require faith-based charitable organizations to disclose their financial statements

- ✓ **SIMULCASTING – SLOTS**
House defeats proposal to install 8,000 slot machines at the state's four racetracks; Approves one-year simulcasting extension, keeping the tracks open and saving hundreds of jobs

- ✓ **CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION 2005 – GAY MARRIAGE**
After compelling debate, majority of legislators vote against advancing constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage and allow for civil unions