



**Office of
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For Immediate Release

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Representative Kane supports creating task force to review unfunded education mandates

BOSTON – State Representative Kane (R-Shrewsbury), joined with her House colleagues this week to support the creation of a task force to review all unfunded mandates the state currently imposes on public schools.

House Minority Leader Bradley H. Jones, Jr. (R-North Reading) and members of the House Republican Caucus offered the proposal as an amendment during the first day of debate on the state budget for Fiscal Year 2017. The amendment was approved on a voice vote on April 25.

“As the daughter of two educators, and a mom of 3 who has invested significant time working to strengthen the Shrewsbury Public Schools, I believe we have lost the ability to judge whether there is substantive value in the vast and increasing number of state laws, regulations and administrative directives or if the demands are simply rote and burdensome to the very system we seek to strengthen,” **said Representative Kane**. “While school systems bear the responsibility of reporting and compliance, the lack of funding and human resources needed to comply means that school systems are ultimately taking resources away from educating and devoting them to reporting. The Educational Mandate Task Force can help identify opportunities for innovation and greater efficiency in reporting requirements so that our public school educators can focus more of their precious time on delivering a world class education to our students.”

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develop recommendations for streamlining, consolidating or eliminating any mandates or reporting requirements that are outdated, duplicative or unnecessary.

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

Suzanne Bump found that in the last five years, ending in December 2015, the Legislature passed 97 new laws that will have a “significant financial impact” on cities and towns. Of those 97, 23 were related to education, which is cited as the biggest local expenditure.

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

The task force will consist of 11 members and will be co-chaired by the House and Senate chairs of the Joint Committee on Education. The Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education will also serve on the task force, along with a legislator appointed by the Senate Minority Leader and a legislator appointed by the House Minority Leader. The six remaining members will be appointed by the Secretary of Education, and will include representatives from the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, the Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials, the Massachusetts Secondary School Administrators’ Association, the Massachusetts Elementary School Principals’ Association, and the Massachusetts Administrators of Special Education.

As part of its review, the task force will be required to hold at least one public hearing. A final report containing the task force’s findings and recommendations will be due no later than one year after its initial meeting.

The House plans to continue debating over 1300 proposed budget amendments this week. The Senate is expected to release its own version of the Fiscal Year 2017 budget in mid-May.

Representative Kane plans to continue advocating for the inclusion of the task force language in the final budget that is submitted to Governor Baker.

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