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For Immediate Release

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Representative Kane supports passage of \$42.7 billion House budget for Fiscal Year 2020

BOSTON – State Representative Hannah Kane, R-Shrewsbury, joined with her House colleagues to approve a \$42.7 billion state budget for Fiscal Year 2020.

Engrossed on a vote of 154-1 on April 25, the House spending plan includes significant funding increases for local aid to cities and towns, while foregoing any broad-based tax increases. It also calls for a \$264 million deposit into the rainy day account, which will provide the state with more than \$2.7 billion to mitigate future spending cuts in the event of an economic downturn.

The House budget provides a \$218 million increase in Chapter 70 education aid, bringing the statewide total to \$5.126 billion, while setting minimum per pupil aid at \$30. An additional \$1.1 billion has been allocated for unrestricted local aid to help support a wide range of municipal services, reflecting a \$29.6 million increase over current fiscal year spending.

Representative Kane noted that the House budget plan will provide Shrewsbury and Westborough with \$20,068,648 and \$8,064,504 in Chapter 70 education aid and \$2,958,042 and \$1,230,539 in unrestricted state aid respectively in Fiscal Year 2020.

During the debate on the budget, Representative Kane was also able to secure funding for important local initiatives for her district, including an allocation of \$50,000 to provide Youth Mental Health First Aid Training through Shrewsbury Youth and Family Services (SYFS) to individuals and organizations in Central Massachusetts and throughout the Commonwealth. SYFS has already provided valuable training and services to Shrewsbury and Westborough Public Schools and Westborough Youth and Family Services.

As Founding Members and House Co-Chairs of the Massachusetts Legislature's Food System Caucus, Representative Kane was joined by Representative Dan Donahue (D-Worcester) in sponsoring an amendment for the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP). Started in 2017, HIP affords low-income residents the opportunity to purchase fresh, healthy and local fruits and vegetables from local farmers, providing critical support for our Commonwealth's farmers and small businesses while investing in our citizens' public health. As the lead sponsors and champions of HIP, Representatives Kane and Donahue were instrumental in securing 127 out of 160 Representatives co-sponsorship for the amendment and

were able to secure a \$500,000 funding increase from the initial House Ways and Means budget for the Program.

To address some of the funding equity concerns raised by the 2015 report of the Foundation Budget Review Commission, the House budget sets aside \$16.5 million to assist school districts serving a high percentage of low-income students. An additional \$2 million has been allocated to the Supporting Healthy Alliances Reinforcing Education (SHARE) grant program, which will help schools address non-academic barriers to student success using community-based resources to improve access to social services and behavioral health providers.

Cities, towns and regional school districts will also see additional education funding under the House budget proposal, which contains:

- \$328.8 million for the Special Education Circuit Breaker, a \$9.5 million increase over current spending;
- \$73.8 million for regional school transportation, a \$4.9 million increase over current levels that will provide for an 80 percent reimbursement rate; and
- \$113 million for charter school tuition reimbursements, an increase of \$23 million.

To help individuals and families struggling with addiction, the House budget provides \$143.9 million for the Bureau of Substance Abuse Addiction Services, which includes funding increases for five new recovery centers and the Massachusetts Access to Recovery services. The budget also includes \$49.4 million for the Substance Use Disorder Trust Fund, and provides EMS and ambulance companies with access to discounted prices on the overdose-reversing drug naloxone.

Several amendments that Representative Kane co-sponsored were also adopted as part of the budget, including:

- Language directing the State Comptroller to transfer up to \$10 million in net surplus funding the Massachusetts Community Preservation Trust Fund to assist cities and towns with their open space, affordable housing, and historic preservation efforts;
- A provision to increase the Conservation Land Tax Credit's annual cap from \$2 million to \$5 million over a three-year period to encourage the permanent protection of conservation land;
- An \$85,000 appropriation for the NEADS Assistance Dogs for Veterans program to train service dogs for veterans;
- \$87 million for Regional Transit Authorities;
- \$17.9 million in funding for local Councils on Aging; and
- A \$35 million supplemental rate increase for nursing homes.

The budget now moves to the Senate, which is expected to release its own spending proposal on May 8.

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