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For Immediate Release

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Representative Kane opposes plan to circumvent committee process to make mail-in voting permanent

BOSTON – State Representative Hannah Kane, R-Shrewsbury, recently opposed an attempt by House leadership to circumvent the committee process to extend mail-in voting on a permanent basis in Massachusetts.

During its June 10 debate on a Fiscal Year 2021 supplemental spending bill, the House adopted an amendment to allow for permanent mail-in voting beginning with the September 2022 state primary and November 2022 general election. Representative Kane voted against the amendment, which passed on a vote of 128-32, citing a number of concerns about the timing of the proposal and the way the issue was brought before the members.

House leadership has consistently discouraged members from filing major policy amendments to spending bills, and instead has emphasized the importance of respecting the committee process and allowing committees to vet and consider the merits of bills that fall under their jurisdiction. Representative Kane said House leadership failed to follow its own directives in allowing the mail-in voting amendment to move forward as part of a larger, unrelated spending bill.

Representative Kane noted that several bills related to mail-in and early voting are currently pending before the Joint Committee on Election Laws, and were the subject of a public hearing less than a month ago, on May 19. She said it would be more appropriate for the committee to be allowed to conduct its due diligence on the mail-in voting proposal and release it as a standalone bill.

Representative Kane also cited a lack of transparency in the process, and noted that members were given little time to consider the amendment, since the underlying bill was polled by the House Ways and Means Committee on June 9 and the amendment was filed shortly before the filing deadline of 5 p.m. that same day. She also questioned the sense of urgency in moving forward now on such a major policy change, arguing there is still plenty of time to vet the issue before the 2022 elections.

The supplemental budget still requires Senate approval, but Representative Kane said it remains unclear if the Senate will even take up the issue as part of the same bill. On the same day the House was debating the supplemental budget, the Senate was considering legislation calling for the extension of

certain COVID-19 protections beyond the end of the June 15 State of Emergency, including a provision allowing for mail-in voting to be temporarily extended through December 15.

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