



Office of
Representative Hannah E. Kane
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 27, 2023

CONTACT: Sophia Flionis, 617-722-2810
sophia.flionis@mahouse.gov

House and Senate enact \$388.6M supplemental budget to support free school meals program, family shelters and other critical funding needs
Spending bill also extends remote meetings until 2025 and outdoor dining until 2024

BOSTON – State Representative Hannah Kane (R-Shrewsbury) recently joined with her House colleagues to support a \$388.6 million supplemental budget that funds critical state programs and services while temporarily extending several pandemic-era policies, including authorizing municipalities to continue providing for remote participation in public meetings until 2025.

House Bill 3548 was approved unanimously on a vote of 153-0 in the House of Representatives and 39-0 in the Senate on March 23, and is now on Governor Maura Healey’s desk for her review and signature. The supplemental budget incorporates aspects of two bills previously filed by Governor Healey to offset funding shortfalls in several state programs and to recapitalize other state initiatives through bond authorizations.

Representative Kane said House Bill 3548 will help address food insecurity issues by providing \$65 million to fund the free school meals program through the end of the current academic year. It also includes \$130 million for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to ensure that families in need have access to healthy food options, now that the additional federal benefits allotted during the pandemic ended on March 2. Another \$2 million is included to reimburse SNAP recipients who were the victims of benefits theft.

Housing and shelter programs are also a focus of the new supplemental budget. Representative Kane noted that House Bill 3548 includes \$45 million for emergency family shelter assistance, along with \$15.7 million for the Residential Assistance to Families in Transition (RAFT) program.

House Bill 3548 also takes steps to support childcare providers who have struggled during the pandemic. The bill authorizes \$68 million for the Commonwealth Cares for Children C3 Stabilization Grants program, which helps early education and care providers cover their day-to-day operational and workforce costs.

According to Representative Kane, the supplemental budget offers assistance to municipalities by allowing the continued use of remote and hybrid meetings of public bodies, as well as reduced quorum requirements for town meetings, until March 31, 2025. It also authorizes a one-year extension of outdoor dining options for restaurants, and gives them the ability to continue serving cocktails, beer and wine in conjunction with food takeout orders until April 1, 2024.

The bill also permanently authorizes public corporations and non-profits to hold certain meetings remotely. In addition, it permanently allows notaries public to conduct remote online notarization using communication

technology and directs the Secretary of State to implement regulations relative to remote notarizations by January 1, 2024.

In addition to the \$388.6 million in direct spending, House Bill 3548 authorizes \$740.3 million in borrowing for multiple state programs, including:

- \$400 million for MassWorks, which provides infrastructure project grants to cities, towns and public entities;
- \$140 million for the Clean Water Trust;
- \$1 million for grants and technical assistance to municipalities and regional applicants to support planning and locally-driven initiatives related to community development, housing production, workforce training and economic opportunity, child care and early education initiatives and climate resilience initiatives;
- \$34 million to provide assistance to projects that will improve, rehabilitate or redevelop blighted, abandoned, vacant or underutilized properties by increasing housing production, supporting economic development projects, and increasing commercial building accessibility to persons with disabilities;
- \$8 million for the Smart Growth Housing Trust Fund;
- \$125 million for the Massachusetts Technology Park Corporation for a matching grant program for tech-based innovation;
- \$14 million for the Massachusetts Technology Park Corporation for a matching grant program for manufacturing;
- \$9.3 million for the Massachusetts Broadband Incentive Fund;
- \$15 million for higher education manufacturing grants; and
- \$30 million to fund broadband infrastructure for public entities

###