



Office of
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Rep. Kane supports supplemental spending bill to fund school meals and extend remote public meetings

BOSTON – Universal free school meals will be funded through the end of the school year and municipalities will be able to continue holding remote meetings for another two years under a \$635 million supplemental spending bill supported by State Representative Hannah Kane (R-Shrewsbury).

House Bill 57 received initial approval from the House of Representatives on March 1, passing on a vote of 153-0. In addition to providing \$65 million in funding for the school breakfast program, the spending bill also authorizes \$130 million in emergency food allotments for households participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistant Program (SNAP) to help offset the end of enhanced federal benefits that went into effect during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Representative Kane noted that additional COVID-era provisions to assist municipalities and businesses will be extended under House Bill 57. Communities are currently allowed to hold remote town meetings with a reduced quorum until March 31, 2023, but the supplemental budget will extend the expiration date until March 31, 2025. Remote meetings of public bodies, agencies and commissions are also subject to the same extension.

According to Representative Kane, House Bill 57 also provides for a one-year extension for restaurants to offer outdoor dining and for licensed establishments to sell alcoholic beverages or wine and malt beverages in conjunction with food takeout and delivery orders. These provisions were due to expire on April 1, 2023 but would be extended until April 1, 2024 under the House proposal.

Representative Kane said the supplemental spending bill also provides:

- \$1 million for grants and technical assistance to municipalities to support community development, housing production, workforce training and economic opportunity, child care and early education, and climate resilience initiatives;
- \$68 million in Early Education and Care Workforce Stabilization Grants;
- \$44.9 million in Emergency Assistance Family Shelters and Services to cover the cost of the projected increase in caseloads under the Emergency Assistance Program;
- \$40 million to address the needs of homeless families and individuals, including health care, supportive services and specialized refugee-focused case management to families who need them;
- \$2 million to reimburse SNAP recipients whose payments were stolen through electronic benefit transfer card skimming;
- \$9.3 million for the Massachusetts Broadband Incentive Fund;
- \$14 million for the Massachusetts Technology Park Corporation to provide matching grants supporting collaboration among Massachusetts manufacturers and institutions of higher education, non-profits and other public or quasi-public entities;

- \$50 million for the Massachusetts Technology Park Corporation to provide matching grants to assist academic institutions, nonprofits, industry consortiums, federally funded research and development centers and other technology-based economic development organizations in competing for federal grants in technology and innovation fields;
- \$15 million for higher education manufacturing grants;
- \$400 million for the MassWorks program;
- \$34 million to assist projects that will improve, rehabilitate or redevelop blighted, abandoned, vacant or underutilized properties;
- \$8 million for the Smart Growth Housing Trust Fund; and
- \$104 million for the Clean Water Trust

House Bill 57, as amended, now heads to the Senate for its consideration.

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