



Office of
Representative Hannah E. Kane
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

For Immediate Release

Contact: Anna Darrow, 617-722-2810, Anna.Darrow@mahouse.gov

April 30, 2021

Representative Kane supports passage of \$47.7 billion House budget for Fiscal Year 2022

BOSTON – State Representative Hannah Kane, R-Shrewsbury, recently supported a House-proposed \$47.7 billion state budget for Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) that increases local aid, funds the first-year implementation of the Student Opportunity Act, and continues to devote funding for a variety of COVID-19 relief and recovery initiatives.

While the pandemic delayed the passage and signing of the Fiscal Year 2021 budget until December of 2020, the budget process is back to a more traditional timetable this year. The House budget proposal was engrossed on a vote of 160-0 in the early morning hours of April 29 after three days of debate on over 1,100 amendments.

The House budget provides \$5.5 billion in Chapter 70 education aid to cities and towns, which represents a \$219.6 million increase over current funding levels, and nearly \$1.2 billion in Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA) to fund essential municipal services. Representative Kane noted that under the House spending proposal, Shrewsbury will receive \$20,252,968 in direct education aid and \$3,061,573 in unrestricted state aid for the new fiscal year that begins July 1. Westborough will receive \$11,190,003 in direct education aid and \$1,273,608 in unrestricted state aid.

The House budget also offers additional education support for municipalities by funding the Special Education Circuit Breaker at \$368.1 million, charter school aid at \$154.6 million, regional school transportation at \$82.2 million, and homeless student transportation at \$14.5 million. To help address some of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the House budget provides an additional \$40 million to help schools maintain funding despite enrollment loss, as well as \$15 million to support summer education, mental health, and socialization services for students.

Representative Kane noted that the budget funds the first year of the Student Opportunity Act (SOA), which was initially scheduled to be implemented beginning in the current fiscal year but was postponed one year due to the pandemic. Despite the delay, the House budget envisions fully implementing the SOA within six years, rather than seven, so the original timetable can be met.

During floor debate on the budget, Representative Kane successfully advocated for the inclusion of several important local initiatives for her district, including \$50,000 for Shrewsbury Youth and Family Services to provide Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) training, service, and treatment efforts across the Commonwealth and \$25,000 for police-worn body cameras for the Shrewsbury Police Department.

The House budget does not incorporate any forthcoming federal aid anticipated under the American Rescue Plan (ARP) Act, but instead proposes a withdrawal of \$1.875 billion from the state's Rainy-Day Fund. It also calls for a one-year delay of the charitable tax deduction, which would save approximately \$64 million in FY22.

To help address food insecurity issues exacerbated by the pandemic, the House budget boosts emergency food assistance funding to \$30 million and the Healthy Incentives Program to \$13 million, top priorities of the Legislature's Food System Caucus of which Representative Kane is a Co-founder and Co-chair. Other funding highlights from the budget include:

- a \$20 million rate increase for the state's childcare providers;
- \$15 million for Head Start Grants;
- \$12 million for child care resource and referral agencies;
- \$2.5 million for early childhood mental health grants;
- \$130 million in higher education scholarship funding;
- \$5 million for local tourism recovery marketing;
- \$5 million for small business technical assistance;
- \$148 million for the Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program;
- \$84 million for public housing subsidies;
- \$22 million for Residential Assistance to Families in Transition (RAFT);
- \$2.29 billion for developmental services, including day and work programs and respite family supports; and
- \$160 million for the Bureau of Substance Abuse Addiction Services.

Among the new policy initiatives included in the House budget is a proposal to make the Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority (MEFA) college savings tax deduction permanent, allowing individuals to deduct up to \$1,000 and married couples to deduct up to \$2,000 for prepaid tuition or college savings program. The budget also creates a commission to develop recommendations and best practices for local and regional public safety responses to mental health emergencies, and establishes an Offshore Wind Energy Career Training Trust Fund to be administered by the Clean Energy Center to help bolster the state's clean energy workforce.

Several additional policy amendments were adopted during the budget debate, including proposals to:

- repeal the 2022 sunset date for the state's film tax credit, which was implemented in 2006 and has helped to generate more than \$2.8 billion in economic development;
- extend the sunset date for the Massachusetts historic rehabilitation tax credit from 2022 until 2027;
- temporarily raise the annual cap on the conservation land tax credit from \$2 million to \$5 million over a three-year period to promote open space protection;
- address the backlog of untested sexual assault evidence kits; and
- establish a Parkinson's Disease Registry.

The budget now moves to the Senate, which is expected to begin debating its own spending proposal the week of May 24.

###