

■ Menu

State Legislative Priorities 2025 - 2026

The 194th General Court of the State Legislature began on January 1, 2025 and ends on December 31, 2026. During this two-year span, we have new opportunities to advocate for and advance the issues and investments most critical to supporting our schools, students, and the working families of the Commonwealth.

Share This Before a bill can go to the floor for a vote, it must have a public hearing. At this point in the session, all bills have been sent to their respective Committees for consideration. The Joint Committees must hold a hearing and issue a report on each bill before them. Currently, Committees are in the process of scheduling and hosting these hearings. Most of the time, these hearings address a number of bills, usually grouped by topic.

We are tracking the various Committees considering our priority bills. These hearings are open to the public and provide a great opportunity for us to testify about a bill's impact - so stay tuned!

EARLY CHILDHOOD AND K-12 EDUCATION

An Act empowering students and schools to thrive

S.374 | Senator Adam Gomez

H. 4328 | Representative Samantha Montaño

The Thrive Act would transform education in the Commonwealth, empowering communities with the tools and resources that students and schools need to thrive, dramatically reducing the harm caused by the state takeovers, establishing a commission that would shape the future vision of student assessments and school accountability, and eliminating the need to expand charter schools as a result of harmful accountability practices.

An Act relative to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

S.377 | Senator Patricia Jehlen

Alters the membership of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education by removing a prohibition on employees of the Commonwealth serving on the Board, and by adding representatives from various teachers' unions.

An Act relative to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education

H.729 | Representatives Steven Ultrino and Sean Garballey

Repeals the requirement that members of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education cannot be employed by or receive regular compensation from the department of education, or from any school system, public or independent, in the commonwealth, or serve as a member of any school committee.

An Act relative to the long-term fiscal health and sustainability of special education in the Commonwealth

S.430 | Senator Jake Oliveira

H.691 | Representatives Adam Scanlon and Michael Kushmerek

Establishes a commission to study the long-term fiscal health and sustainability of Special Education in the Commonwealth, including the distribution of funding a more equitable Share system (so that schools serving more students with special needs get more money), covering the costs of out-of-district placements for students with extraordinary needs, and working toward fully funding the circuit breaker.

An Act eliminating education funding inflation gap

S.345 | Senator Sal DiDomenico

Amends the inflation calculation component of the Chapter 70 K-12 school funding formula by deleting the 4.5 percent cap on inflation adjustments and inserting language that calculates inflation by comparing it to the same period two years earlier.

An Act modernizing school construction

S.318 | Senator Brendan Crighton

H.526 | Representative Dan Cahill

Overhauls the funding formula for the Massachusetts School Building Authority to provide more opportunities for investment in projects that would benefit low-income communities. Sales tax revenue automatically earmarked for the MSBA would be doubled while lifting the cap on reimbursement.

An Act ensuring high quality pre-kindergarten education

S.339 | Senator Sal DiDomenico

H.687 | Representative Lindsay Sabadosa

Establishes a high-quality pre-kindergarten education grant program to support the implementation of high-quality pre-kindergarten programs for children between the ages of 2 years and 9 months and the age a child becomes eligible for kindergarten.

An Act relative to healthy and sustainable schools

S.2275 | Senator Paul Feeney

H.3476 | Representative Marjorie Decker

Establishes a statewide goal to decarbonize public schools, public universities, and community colleges by mandating and facilitating energy audits, efficiency upgrades, and solar power. Schools located in environmental justice communities would receive priority for energy audits and energy efficiency improvements. In addition to creating union jobs, it calls for projects to prioritize hiring from pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs, creating opportunities for students.

An Act relative to charter school expansion

H.593 | Representative Richard Haggerty

If the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education rejects a charter school's expansion plan, there must be a 3-year cooling off period before the charter school can re-apply.

Share

This An Act relative to local approval for charter schools

S. 414 | Senator Michael Moore

H.692 | Representative Adam Scanlon

Requires a locally elected body to authorize local funds being allocated for a charter school. If a municipal board has voted against a local charter school expanding in their district and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) votes to allow said charter expansion to go forward, it is incumbent on the Board to provide the funding to the charter school, it shall not come from the community's Chapter 70 funding.

An Act implementing elementary and secondary interdisciplinary climate literacy education

S.391 | Senator Jason Lewis

H.560 | Representative Mindy Domb

Requires climate literacy education in our schools to provide students with the knowledge and skills to fully understand and address climate change in their communities.

An Act to expand student opportunities in career technical education

S.326 | Senator John Cronin

Allows cities or towns that are part of a regional vocational school district to introduce vocational technical education programs in their municipal high schools, subject to Chapter 74 regulations

An Act to promote comprehensive and inclusive curriculum in schools

S.371 Senator Adam Gomez

H.655 | Representatives Tram Nguyen and Steven Ultrino

Establishes a Comprehensive and Inclusive Curriculum Trust Fund to provide funding for public schools to develop culturally inclusive curriculum, including the teaching of accurate histories, writings, and contributions of racial and ethnic groups that have been historically underrepresented or marginalized.

An Act relative to charter school procurement

H.3423 | Representatives Steven Ultrino and Paul Donato

Adds charter schools explicitly to the uniform procurement act

An Act requiring financial education in schools

S.381 | Senator Patrick O'Connor

H.46 | Treasurer Deborah Goldberg

H.636 | Representative Kate Lipper-Garabedian

Share

This Establishes the Financial Literacy Trust Fund to provide resources for curriculum development and teacher training with priority support for underserved communities and schools that are new to implementing financial literacy programs.

An Act Fulfilling the Promise of Education Reform

S.343 | Senator Sal DiDomenico

H.734 | Representatives Andy Vargas and Manny Cruz

Establishes a Special Commission to study the current status, structures, future vision and needs of public education which will include but not be limited to all aspects of where we want public education to be in five to ten years.

An Act relative to recess for elementary and middle school students

H.543 | Representative Marjorie Decker

Ensures that all students in grades K-8 receive at least 30 minutes of free-play recess per school day.

An Act to establish a community schools special legislative commission

S.409 | Senator Paul Mark

H.726 | Representative Chynah Tyler

Establishes a legislative commission dedicated to examining the implementation and effectiveness of community schools in Massachusetts.

An Act promoting safe technology use and distraction-free education for youth S.335 | Senator Julian Cyr

Requires public schools in Massachusetts to develop and implement policies governing the use of personal electronic devices.

An Act to ensure equitable access to education, including special education services, for all students in Massachusetts

S.317 | Senator Cynthia Creem

H.546 | Representative Marjorie Decker

Directs DESE to annually analyze and publish information pertaining to school performance, student punishments including corporal punishment, school bullying, activities of school resource officers, charter school operations, school census data, standardized testing results, student class assignments, reports of superintendents and more.

An Act enhancing learning in the early school years through a ban on school Share exclusion in public prekindergarten through 3rd grade

This S.373 | Senator Adam Gomez

H.541 | Representative Marjorie Decker

Progressively outlaws the expulsion or suspension of elementary school students, with kindergarten through third grade prohibited on passage, fourth grade after one year, and fifth grade after two.

An Act creating documentation requirement standards to demonstrate a disability for a public institution of higher education in the Commonwealth

H.1433 | Representative Gentile

This bill would require public colleges and universities to accept a student's existing IEP or 504 Plan as sufficient proof of their disability when seeking accommodations, streamlining the process and removing the need for costly reevaluations.

An Act to reform charter school funding in Massachusetts

SD.3006 | Senator Comerford

H.4511 | Representative Domb

Sets overall charter school cap to 9% for all districts and those operating above 9% at the level necessary to support current enrollment; establishes mandatory criteria that the

Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) and the department must consider when recommending and approving new charter schools, including its impact on enrollment, finances, and short- and long-term viability; requires BESE to hold a public hearing on any charter school expansion proposal if a member of the school committee in any potentially impacted district makes that request to the department; a new cost-sharing arrangement between the state and districts would be established, the district would be responsible for the per pupil facilities component (which would continue to qualify for reimbursement) and the per pupil foundation budget component. The state would be responsible for any above foundation spending component.

An Act relative to support for the school library standards

S.428 | Senator Oliveira

H.4207 | Representative Puppolo

DESE shall adopt AASL and MSLA school library standards that promote effective school library programs, including, but not limited to: (a) a well-rounded grade-appropriate collection that supports the curriculum as well as independent reading and inquiry; (b) the teaching of information literacy and research skills for students in kindergarten to grade 12; (c) furthers reading proficiency and competencies for all students; and (d) integrates learning technologies across the curriculum.

Share This DESE shall require a study by the department relative to the implementation of the school library standards beginning in the third year after the enactment of said standards. Subject to appropriation, the department shall conduct a study in each third year following the initial study, including a study of employment of school librarians and staff and the type of school library programs being offered in schools to students.

An Act relative to student financial literacy

S.423 | Senator O'Connor

In all public schools, financial literacy shall be taught as required subjects to promote an understanding of personal finances and financial stability. Instruction shall include (i) loans; (ii) interest and interest accrual; (iii) credit card debt; (iv) online commerce; (v) rights and responsibilities of renting or buying a home; (vi) saving, investing and planning for retirement; (vii) the role of banking and financial services; (viii) balancing a checkbook; (ix) state and federal taxes; (x) charitable giving; (xi) evaluating media content, including online content, that relates to personal finance matters; and (xii) saving, investing and planning for higher education or professional training. The department may apply for federal, state or other funding, including funding available through the Economic Empowerment Trust Fund.

Support for the School Library Standards

S.428 | Senator Oliveira

H.4207 | Representative Puppolo, Jr.

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An Act Honoring the Commonwealth's Commitment to Public school districts

H.577 | Representative Fluker-Reid

Changes the charter school tuition reimbursement schedule to 100-80-60-40).

Share HIGHER EDUCATION

An Act relative to the rights of faculty members at UMass

S.933 | Senator Patricia Jehlen

If a faculty member requests, they shall have a right to an open meeting, or with counsel at an executive session, for a tenure decision by the UMass Board of Trustees.

An Act banning legacy preferences in higher education

S.928 | Senator Lydia Edwards

H.1452 | Representative Mike Moran

Bans legacy preferences in higher education within the Commonwealth. Public higher education institutions (including the UMass system and all public universities and colleges) could not consider if an applicant has a family tie to the college or university when determining admission.

An Act relative to debt-free public higher education

S.929 | Senator James Eldridge

H.1436 | Representatives Natalie Higgins and Carmine Lawrence Gentile

Creates a grant program to pay the equivalent of tuition and mandatory fees to all eligible students at any Massachusetts public college or university.

An Act streamlining state employee collective bargaining

S.1364 | Senator Pavel Payano

H.2820 | Representative Rodney Elliot

Collective bargaining agreements will automatically be enacted within thirty days unless explicitly rejected by the general court or withdrawn by the governor.

An Act to Build Resilient Infrastructure to Generate Higher Education Transformation (BRIGHT Act)

H.54 | Governor Healey

Use funding from the voter-approved Fair Share amendment to unlock \$2.5 billion in new capital funding to improve UMass, state university, and community college campuses across the state. The investments authorized in the bill will modernize facilities, including new labs, classrooms and mental health spaces, address deferred maintenance and enable major capital projects.

An Act to preserve and advance Massachusetts' competitiveness in discovery, research, and innovation for a vibrant economy (DRIVE Act)

H.4375 | Governor Healey

The Governor's legislation proposes \$400 million in state funding to leverage private and Share institutional resources to retain world-class talent, preserve jobs and protect the engines of Massachusetts' innovation economy. This will include \$200 million to a one-time multi-year research funding pool, housed at MassDevelopment. This fund will support research projects at hospitals, universities, and independent research institutions, as well as a one-year fellowship program for early career professionals. It will be paid for using the interest off the state's stabilization fund.

The other \$200 million will be placed in a public higher education bridge funding reserve, funded by Fair Share surtax revenue. This will provide Massachusetts public higher education campuses support for direct and indirect costs of research, cross-regional partnerships and joint ventures. Additionally, the reserve sets aside funding to preserve and hire positions in research and teaching, including graduate, post doctorate, and other early career professionals.

RETIRING WITH DIGNITY

An Act relative to benefits for teachers/An Act relative to teacher retirement election

S.1884 | Senator Liz Miranda

H.2932 | Representatives Alice Peisch and Rob Consalvo

Allows teachers hired before July 1, 2001, who did not provide a written election to participate in RetirementPlus, to have an opportunity to do so.

An Act relative to creditable service for school nurses

S.1787 | Senator Michael Brady

H.2887 | Representative Kathleen LaNatra

Improves creditable service for school nurses for periods of work in the field.

An Act to provide fair and affordable public retiree benefits

S.1817 | Senator Julian Cyr

H.2812 | Representative Daniel Donohue

Calls for immediately increasing the COLA base to \$18,000, and then gradually increasing the base until it reaches the maximum social security benefit for an individual worker retiring at full retirement age. Also mandates that the maximum out-of-pocket health care coverage costs for retirees over the age of 65 who are not eligible for Medicare would be \$2,500 for individuals and \$5,000 for families.

An Act enabling employees on unpaid parental leave to purchase creditable service

H.2946 | Representative Sean Reid

Share Allow retirement system members to purchase up to two years of parental leave.

An Act relative to non-public school service

S.1900 | Senator Mike Rush

Allows vested retirement system members to purchase service for up to four years of time worked in non-public schools.

An Act to provide retirement incentives in public higher education

H.2843 | Representative Carmine Gentile

Establishes a retirement incentive for employees of state universities.

An Act providing creditable service for certain teachers

H.2873 | Representative Dan Hunt

Allow purchase of creditable service for layoffs due to budgetary reasons.

MEMBER BENEFITS

An Act relative to educator pay

S.370 | Senator Adam Gomez

H.733 | Representatives Erika Uyterhoeven and Tara Hong

Increases salary minimums to \$70K for teachers and \$55K for paraprofessionals and adjusts for inflation.

An Act relative to establishing a tuition free program for teachers and paraprofessionals

H.1465 | Representatives Steven Ultrino and Vanna Howard

Allow any public-school teacher or paraprofessional currently working in the Commonwealth to attend courses at the state's public institutions of higher education at no cost.

An Act to restore collective bargaining for teachers and other school employees H.2088 | Representative Marjorie Decker

Restores Collective Bargaining to Level 4 and 5 Schools and Districts, Horace Mann and Innovation Schools.

An Act uplifting families and securing the right to strike for certain public employees

S.1311 | Senator James Eldridge

H.2078 | Representatives Mike Connolly and Erica Uyterhoeven

Repeals the ban on certain public employees or their union from engaging in a strike.

Share An Act to establish comprehensive rights and career advancement for contingent faculty in public higher education

S.930 | Senator James Eldridge

Establishes a number of rights for contingent faculty, including access to professional development opportunities, employment security provisions, and a clear system structure for pay and benefits to ensure equity.

An Act to establish a master of library science assistance program

S.931 | Senator Paul Feeney

Establish a MS in Library Science Tuition Assistance Grant Program.

An Act to provide paid family and medical leave to educators and municipal employees

H.2079 | Representative Mike Connolly

Extends Paid Family and Medical Leave to public K-12 educators and other municipal employees with state reimbursing municipalities.

An Act establishing Medicare for All in Massachusetts

H.1405 | Representatives Sabadosa and Scarsdale

Policy of the Commonwealth to provide equitable access to quality, health care services for all its residents as a right, responsive to the needs of the Commonwealth and its residents, without co-insurance, co-payments, deductibles, or any other form of patient cost sharing, and be accountable to its citizens though the Trust. The Trust shall be responsible for the collection and disbursement of funds required to provide health care services for every resident of the Commonwealth; Reviews powers of the Trust, Board, Executive Directors, eligibility criteria for Mass residents.

CIVIL RIGHTS, ECONOMIC JUSTICE, AND PROTECTING ACCESS TO CARE

An Act ensuring our freedom to read in the Commonwealth

H.3591 | Representative James Hawkins

Allow public library systems to acquire materials without external limitations and protect them against attempts to ban, remove, or otherwise restrict access to books or other materials. Also calls for the adoption of the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights.

An Act regarding free expression

S.2328 | Senator Julian Cyr

H.3594 | Representatives John Moran and Adam Scanlon

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Standards to protect books from being removed from public places.

An Act relative to student and educator data privacy

H.633 | Representatives Kate Lipper-Garabedian and Jeffrey Roy

Protects the privacy of students and educators.

An Act combatting offshore tax avoidance

S.2033 | Senators Jason Lewis and Liz Miranda

H.3110 | Representative Gonzalez

An Act combatting tax avoidance (Corporate Fair Share) would increase the share of those offshored profits that Massachusetts collects tax on - bringing our policy in line with federal tax policy and what our neighbors in Rhode Island, Vermont, Maine, and New Hampshire already do.

An Act relative to immigration detention and collaboration agreements

S.1122 | Senator Adam Gómez

H.1588 | Representatives Christine Barber and David M. Rogers

This bill would end all detention agreements with ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement), including 287(g) agreements, which deputize local, county, and state authorities to enforce federal immigration law, and IGSA agreements (Intergovernmental Service Agreements), which allow sheriffs to rent a section of their jails to house immigration detainees. Collaboration agreements would end 30 days after enactment of the bill, and detention agreements would end 90 days after enactment. Currently, whether or not these agreements get signed and/or renewed is entirely up to the sheriff, with no state oversight. This bill requires that, in the future, any agreement that a sheriff might want to sign would have to first be approved by the Governor. LWV summary.

An Act promoting diversion of juveniles to community supervision and services

S.1051 | Senator Cynthia Creem

H.1695 | Representative Brandy Fluker-Reid

This bill expands the types of juvenile offenses that are eligible for judicial pre-arraignment diversion. It would give judges the discretion to decide if both the youth and public safety would be better served through alternative to the juvenile justice system. This bill would allow an individualized hearing after which a judge may accept or reject diversion. It is important to remember that this law simply allows judges to exercise discretion in more cases. It does not guarantee diversion for the eligible offenses. LWV summary.

Share An Act relative to expungement of juvenile and young adult records

S.1058 | Senator Cynthia Creen

H.1657 | Representative Marjorie Decker

This bill would: clarify that offenses of children under age 12 would be eligible for expungement as offenses that could no longer be prosecuted; limit offenses with a lifetime ban on expungement to those resulting in serious bodily injury and sex-based offenses resulting in sex offender registration; allow eligibility for non-convictions and non-adjudications; create an incentive to desistance from re-offending by removing barriers to expunging cases with juvenile adjudications; prohibit dissemination of finger print juvenile arrests to the FBI, unless it is to submit a sealing or expungement order; and. evaluate impact and implementation of the expungement law. Citizens for Juvenile Justice summary.

An Act relative to sexual harassment workplace training

H.2190 | Representative Christopher Worrell

Mandates that all employers, employment agencies, and labor organizations in Massachusetts foster a workplace environment free from unlawful harassment, including sexual harassment.

An Act relative to workforce training

S.1295 | Senator Brendan Crighton

Combat workplace harassment by requiring all employers, employment agencies, and labor organizations to foster environments free from illegal harassment, including sexual harassment.

An Act Fostering Artificial Intelligence Responsibility (FAIR Act)

S.35 | Senator Fernandes

H.77 | Farley-Bouvier

Regulates AI in the workplace, restricts worker surveillance (restricts collection of biometric, health, sensitive data and use of data as a way to retaliate), Human autonomy and dignity (places final decision-making power in a human).

An Act relative to the safety of autonomous vehicles (WAYMO)

S.2393 | Senator Feeney

H.3669 | Representative Giannino

An autonomous vehicle registered in this state must continue to meet federal standards and regulations for a motor vehicle. The vehicle shall not be engaged in the transport of interstate commerce or the transporting of passengers, or the transporting of goods unless Share a human safety operator is physically present in the autonomous vehicle.

An Act modernizing firearm laws

H.3980 | Representative Day

Comprehensive approach to preventing gun violence and ensuring that Massachusetts remains one of the safest states in the nation. The law tackles a variety of issues related to access to firearms, firearm safety, and more. The law includes several lifesaving measures, such as regulating ghost guns and creating a public dashboard to track crime gun data. Of particular importance to educators, the legislation contains provisions designed to keep schools, students, and staff safer:

- Expands who can petition for an Extreme Risk Protection Order to include mental health and medical professionals, as well as school personnel.
- Prohibits guns in polling places, an important measure for polling sites located in or near schools.
- Establishes a commission to promote equity in violence intervention funding, ensuring resources reach the communities most impacted by gun violence.

An Act establishing a jail and prison construction moratorium

S.2114 | Senator Comerford

H.3422 | Representative Tyler

The Prison Moratorium has the power to pause Governor Healey's plan to build a \$360 million women's prison complex while we get important answers and consider alternatives.

An Act establishing a climate change superfund" ("Make Polluters Pay" or "Climate Superfund")

S.588 | Senator Eldridge

H.1014 | Representatives Owens and Lewis

A bill in the MA legislature introduced by Sen. Jamie Eldridge, Rep. Steve Owens, and Rep. Jack Lewis, that requires the worst carbon emitters to contribute to a Superfund to pay for climate-related damages in Massachusetts. Fossil fuel companies have knowingly endangered our world for decades, putting our lives and livelihoods at risk – they should be responsible for the damages. The Climate Adaptation Superfund will provide funding for projects across the Commonwealth that keep our communities safe from the impacts of climate change.

An Act designating January 30 of each year as Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution in Massachusetts

S.2132 | Senator Eldridge

Share H.3437 | Representative Uyterhoeven

The governor shall annually issue a proclamation setting apart January 30 of each year as Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution, in recognition of the birthday of Fred Korematsu and to educate about and honor the life of Fred Korematsu, his perseverance, and his determination to advocate for the civil liberties of all Americans, and recommending that the day be an opportunity for civic participation and observed in an appropriate manner by the people.

An Act ensuring access to equitable representation in immigration proceedings

S.1127 | Senator Gomez

H.1954 | Representatives Rogers and F. Moran

The "Immigrant Legal Defense Act Fund" would provide no cost legal services to income qualifying Massachusetts residents facing deportation.

An Act to protect the civil rights and safety of all Massachusetts residents

S.1681 | Senator Eldridge

H.2580 | Representatives Cruz and Sousa

The "Safe Communities Act" would prevent local law enforcement from acting as ICE deputies. No officer or employee of a law enforcement agency, while acting under the law,

shall question persons about their immigration status).

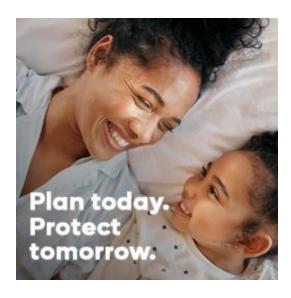
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