

Governor Patrick Releases FY11 Budget Plan

Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick has released his proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2011, which begins on July 1, 2010.

The budget, released on January 27, DOES NOT include any proposed increases in health insurance contribution rates for state and higher education workers.

However, as expected, the budget plan does include deep funding cuts in several areas of the budget aimed at closing a structural deficit of nearly \$3 billion for the next fiscal year. The governor is proposing significant funding reductions for state human services programs and state parks and recreation facilities.

In addition, the governor's proposed budget includes language that would allow the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) to enter into long-term lease agreements for the purpose of privatizing all remaining DCR operated skating rinks. He has also included language that would facilitate the sale of Glavin Regional Center, which serves as home for nearly 60 developmentally disabled men and women. Glavin is one of four residential facilities for the developmentally disabled that the governor has targeted for closure. Council 93 continues to oppose the closure of these facilities.

There is some good news in the governor's spending plan. He is proposing an increase in funding for state colleges,

universities and community colleges and increased aid for K-12 education. He is also recommending level funding for unrestricted state aid to cities and towns.

In addition, the plan includes limited revenue enhancements to help offset cuts including an expansion of the bottle bill and new taxes on candy, soda and smokeless tobacco and cigars.

The budget process now moves to the House of Representatives, which is expected to release its proposed spending plan in April, followed by a proposed budget from the Senate in May. The two branches will then work to resolve differences in their respective budgets and present one budget to the governor for approval prior to the July 1 start of the new fiscal year.

As always, Council 93's Department of Legislation, Political Action and Communications will be closely monitoring the budget process and will work to protect current health insurance contribution rates and funding for the essential public services delivered by AFSCME members.

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