
PRESS RELEASE

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SENATE ADOPTS ROADMAP TO RECOVERY FOR CITIES AND TOWNS

2006 Budget Reflects Commitment to Education, Health Care and Public Safety

Statehouse, Boston--May 25, 2005— Senator Joan M. Menard (D-Fall River) is pleased to announce that following two days of debate, the Massachusetts State Senate today unanimously approved a \$24 billion budget that takes a big step towards restoring local aid and education funding cuts that have impacted nearly every city and town in the Commonwealth over the last three years.

"This budget demonstrates the progress that the state is making in re-establishing its financial viability," said Senator Menard. "We're making investments in priorities like education, public safety, public health and community services so the cities and towns of the First Bristol and Plymouth District can begin easing the hardships they've had to struggle with."

The Senate's chief budget writer, Ways and Means Chair Therese Murray (D-Plymouth) crafted a solid and balanced spending plan that guarantees every school district receives an increase of at least \$50 a student and gives communities \$100 million more in lottery payments. The Senate budget would also restore full lottery payments to cities and towns by accelerating the schedule to uncap lottery distributions beginning in FY06 instead of FY07 and provides \$15 million for cutting water and sewer rates for 2.5 million residents and businesses.

"Over the past two days, the Senate has debated and passed a budget that is balanced, fiscally responsible, and contains the historic Senate priorities of health care, education, local aid and public safety," said Senator Murray. "I look forward to working with our colleagues in the House of Representatives to craft a compromise budget that continues the commitments made in the Senate's final budget to the residents of the Commonwealth."

Below is a highlight of the Senate Budget including several budget items of local significance: