

Education

The Senate budget dedicates significant resources to build upon the gains of education reform over the last 12 years to provide a seamless education for students from pre-kindergarten through college. Educational appropriations include:

- \$12.5 million in the new Department of Early Education and Care to develop standards for all child care services and educational programs so that children are ready to learn when they enter kindergarten.
- A 4.7 percent increase in K-12 spending which includes \$55 million in reserves to fund future legislation to reform the distribution formula for school aid and help under-performing and at-risk school districts.
- \$45 million to offset the cost of regional transportation for local school districts—a \$7 million increase over last year's budget.
- A \$2 million increase for the METCO Program.
- \$18.3 million more for University of Massachusetts campuses.
- A seven and six percent increase for state and community colleges.
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Health Care

Massachusetts is at the crossroads for cutting the cost of medical care while improving quality and access to our medical institutions. Faced with the potential loss of millions in federal Medicaid funds, the Senate budget reaffirms its commitment to the Commonwealth's safety net of caring for the uninsured by:

- Investing \$7.39 billion in MassHealth programs that will provide coverage for a nearly a million low income residents and help cut the number of uninsured, including 3,500 elderly and disabled legal immigrants.
- Fully funding the free care pool at \$535 million and increase payments to distressed providers to over \$40 million.
- Fully funding the Children's Medical Security plan at \$21.7 million to provide basic health coverage to every child in the Commonwealth.
- Appropriating \$2 million to the children's immunization program.

Public Safety

Many communities are still facing severely depleted police and emergency first responder forces. Several of the following proposals in the Senate budget bolster local law enforcement efforts to increase neighborhood patrols and special investigations to protect residents.

- Funds two new State Police cadet classes at \$11.5 million
- Provides \$1.2 million for state and local patrols targeting gang-related activity.
(Fall River specifically earmarked in this funding for State Police Patrols)