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Gobi Supports Supplemental Budget with Amendments Aimed to Boost Funding for State and Local Services

BOSTON—On Thursday, **Senator Anne M. Gobi (D-Spencer)** and the Massachusetts Senate passed a \$156.4M supplemental budget to cover increased caseloads and time sensitive deficiencies in Fiscal Year 2018, including additional funding for Regional Transit Authorities, local school districts' special education costs and programs for Massachusetts children and families.

Recognizing the financial challenges Regional Transit Authorities across the state face in providing reliable, affordable transportation, the supplemental budget invests an additional \$4 million in these services. When asked about the increased funding Senator Gobi had this to say, "I have attended meetings and have listened to friends and neighbors whose quality of life would be changed by the reduction or loss of bus service. As the Senate Chair of the Regional Transportation Caucus I was glad to work for increased funding and will continue to throughout the entire budget process."

Contained in the bill is an amendment sponsored by Senator Gobi that removes language previously barring towns from applying for MassWorks grants with populations under 7,000. "Our 136 small towns, including 13 in my Senate district, should not be placed at an unfair advantage," said Senator Gobi. "My amendment, which passed unanimously, removes onerous language that prevented the opportunity to apply for road and bridge grants on a yearly basis. This change can potentially bring in millions more to our small towns for needed infrastructure."

Another program Senator Gobi has been an avid champion for, the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP), gained a much needed boost to the tune of \$2.2 million to increase access to nutritious foods for low-income residents, "It is great to see successful programs that promote local

agriculture and healthy foods. Outdoor Farmers Markets will be opening soon so it was necessary to add funding for the start of the season."

Senator Gobi was also proud to co-sponsor an amendment that addressed municipal police training funding. The amendment creates a dedicated funding stream by adding a \$2 fee per rental car transaction in the Commonwealth which will create a steady flow of income and allow the Municipal Police Training Committee to maintain critical services and expand training, "I appreciate the work my Police Chiefs and Officers do to protect our communities, said Senator Gobi. " They want to make sure they have the best training possible for their safety and ours. Creating a dedicated revenue stream to accomplish that makes sense and the unanimous vote showed my support and that of all my colleagues."

The supplemental budget also includes \$12.5 million for the Special Education Circuit Breaker, increasing reimbursements to school districts for the high cost of educating students with disabilities.

Additional investments include:

- \$25.6M for Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) Grants
- \$21.1M for the operation of the Commonwealth's county sheriffs
- \$19.3M for Emergency Assistance Family Shelters
- \$15.5M for recently ratified collective bargaining agreements
- \$5.3M for veterans' benefits
- \$4.5M to support payroll costs at the Department of Correction payroll and \$2M to support payroll costs at the Department of Developmental Services
- \$2.5M for services for hurricane evacuees residing in Massachusetts
- \$2M for DCF Family Resource Centers to support increased demand for services from hurricane evacuees
- \$1M to support the Prevention and Wellness Trust Fund
- \$150K for the Municipal Naloxone Bulk Purchasing Trust Fund

The bill will now be reconciled with a version passed by the House of Representatives.

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