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Senate Passes FY 2020 COVID-19 \$1.1B Supplemental Budget

Bill authorizes funding support for emergency child care needs, behavioral health services, small businesses and makes Juneteenth an official state holiday

BOSTON (7/03/2020) – The Massachusetts State Senate on Thursday, July 2, 2020, passed a \$1.1B supplemental budget for Fiscal Year 2020 to support extraordinary costs related to the COVID-19 pandemic that require immediate attention. The spending authorized in this supplemental budget will maximize federal financial support while providing critical resources for our most vulnerable populations.

This bill is the result of strong advocacy by Senators and the Senate’s COVID-19 Working Group and includes funding support for personal protective equipment, emergency child care for essential workers, health care supports for behavioral health services, small business assistance grants, housing and homelessness supports, food security, and direct support for workers impacted by the ongoing public health crisis. In addition to recognizing the health and safety needs of residents, the legislation also establishes Juneteenth as an official state holiday.

“I am proud of the action we have taken in this bill to support the varying sectors impacted by this public health crisis and look towards the future needs of our communities,” commented **Senator Anne Gobi (D-Spencer)**. “The priorities targeted here to provide funding for PPE, emergency childcare, and addressing growing food insecurity are representative of the pressing issues facing the Commonwealth, and this spending bill will provide the necessary resources for the steps we need to take.”

To support working families during this uncertain economic time and provide health care supports in the midst of this public health crisis, the supplemental budget passed today by the Senate includes **\$82M** for childcare needs, including emergency child care for essential workers, **\$15M** for essential behavioral health services, including services for children, **\$10M** for small business assistance grants, focused on minority, women and veteran-owned businesses in underserved areas and **\$10M** to provide wage supports to workers impacted by COVID-19.

In response to growing food insecurity challenges during this pandemic, the supplemental budget provides an immediate state allocation of **\$15M** for food security supports, including **\$9M** for the Massachusetts

Emergency Food Assistance Program to support our overstretched food bank system during this time of incredible need.

Through the amendment process, the Senate also established a **\$500** bonus for members of the Massachusetts National Guard who were mobilized to combat COVID-19, included increase funding to assist with coronavirus mitigation efforts at summer camps and youth programs, and create an Early Education and Child Care Public-Private Trust Fund to help inform and support child care needs across the state.

Other notable spending highlights of the FY 2020 COVID-19 supplemental budget include:

- \$350M for personal protective equipment.
- \$139M for rate add-ons for congregate care and other health and human service providers.
- \$85M for field hospitals and shelters.
- \$44M for the Community Tracing Collaborative.
- \$30M for community health centers.
- \$28M for local housing authorities and family and individual shelter services.
- \$20M for expanded RAFT coverage for families on the brink of homelessness.
- \$20M focused on racial disparities in the health care system during the pandemic.
- \$15M for elder affairs services and home care workforce wage supports.
- \$12.3M for early intervention services.
- \$10M for grants to community foundations serving low-income and immigrant populations with direct supports like housing assistance and food security supports.
- \$5M for increased costs related to the recent conference report on expanded vote-by-mail measures for the 2020 election cycle.
- \$2M to provide financial assistance to small non-profits impacted by COVID-19.

The supplemental budget also establishes Juneteenth as an official state holiday. Juneteenth is a celebration of the day in 1865 when the remaining enslaved African Americans in the United States were told of their freedom under the Emancipation Proclamation.

The Senate and Massachusetts House of Representatives will now work to reconcile outstanding differences between the supplemental budgets passed in each chamber.

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