
The Rosenberg Report

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Hello!

MUNICIPAL CONFERENCE ALERT: Here's a quick reminder to all you municipal officials out there. This year's Conference for Municipal Officials is just three weeks away! I am very pleased to announce that Congressman Richard Neal will be our keynote speaker and that a number of my House and Senate colleagues have agreed to participate. So don't forget: Saturday, April 30th, 2005, at The Clarion Hotel and Conference Center in Northampton.

Please click here for complete details and an on-line registration form.

<http://www.stanrosenberg.com/info/muncon2005.html>

If you have any questions or comments, or if you want to register by phone, contact Tom in my district office at 413-587-6289 or at tumitch@sprynet.com.

See you April 30th,



April Focus

Higher Education

It's time Massachusetts woke up to the importance of public higher education. So, here are a few facts that might prove quicker than coffee:

Fact: We are the only state in the nation spending less on public higher education today than 10 years ago.

Fact: We now spend more on incarceration than we do on public higher education.

Fact: Between 2002 and 2004, we reduced funding for public higher education by 32.6 percent, adjusted for inflation, the largest reduction in the nation.

Fact: We're in serious trouble.

Unless, of course, we turn this situation around. Now.

For the past year, I co-chaired the Senate's Task Force on Higher Education with Senator Steven Panagiotakos (D-Lowell), vice chair of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means. This Task Force was charged with developing a 5-7-year strategy to address the shortfalls in our public higher education system. Our conclusions are not startling: Because we have few natural resources, limited agriculture and an ever-shrinking manufacturing sector, our future prosperity depends on our capacity for innovation. And innovation requires education. Lots of it.

What is startling is the likely consequence of continuing down our current path. With every other state focusing on public higher education, with other countries, notably India and China, making great economic strides with high-tech innovations, we are running the very real risk of knee-capping our children, especially those of modest means, and, consequently, our economy, setting both up to be under-achievers in an over-achievers world.

Right now, the Massachusetts workforce is impressive, arguably cutting-edge. For example, we have the highest concentration of Ph.D.'s in the world and we are known globally for our leadership in research and development and biomedical science. Our reputation is superb. But we can't build our future on reputation alone. We must have a long-term strategy for success. Our rivals already have such a strategy. It's called investing in public higher education. We can do likewise, and do the work necessary to create a competitive, high-tech economy and the workforce to run it, or we can do nothing. We can lead, or we can be left behind. There really isn't a third way.

In the coming weeks, the Task Force will submit to the Legislature a plan designed to build on the existing system, to position Massachusetts at the vanguard of the world's knowledge-based economies, and to fulfill the critical goal of wedding public higher education and high-tech job creation. Here are just a few specific proposals:

Money and More Money

Let's face it. We're not going anywhere without money. Our plans include:

- Investing \$400 million, adjusted for inflation, over 5-7 years to fully fund the formula established by the Board of Higher Education in the 1990s to calculate each campus' annual budget requests.
- Investing \$1.7 billion for the UMass system over five years and \$1.2 billion for state and community colleges over 10 years for capital improvements. A world-class system must have world-class facilities, and the Commonwealth has not done nearly enough in this regard. For example, the state has invested a mere \$287 million since 1997 for capital improvements for the UMass system. But in Connecticut, a state half our size, taxpayers supported virtually all of a recently completed \$1 billion capital program for UConn, and are preparing to do the same for an additional \$1.3 billion capital campaign set to begin this year.
- Authorizing each public campus to establish a "rainy day fund" consisting of a minimum contribution from their annual budgets and any unspent state appropriations. Current state law requires campuses to return unspent appropriations

to the general fund, contributing to the financial roller coaster the campuses have experienced the past several years.

- Investing \$100 million over 10 years for the Endowment Incentive Program. The endowment incentive program provides a state match for money raised privately by the state's colleges, community colleges and the University.

Minds and Muscles

An “innovation economy” needs both. We must have professors in the classrooms and professionals in the private sector engaged in a coordinated effort creating the jobs and training the people to perform them. Toward that end, we propose:

- Immediately investing \$150 million to develop the facilities – laboratories, equipment, etc. – necessary to propel the “innovation economy.”
- Providing \$20 million in matching funds for endowed professorships at UMass, focused on key science and technology areas.
- Authorizing the Executive Office of Economic Affairs to work with private sector leaders and the University to identify the research and development areas that hold the greatest economic promise for the state.
- Investing an initial \$1 million to assist the University in creating economic development initiatives in under-served regions of the state.
- Creating regional economic development centers to help state and community colleges work more closely with the private sector.
- Investing an initial \$1 million for additional degree and certificate programs in such growth areas as health care, education – especially early childhood – technology and tourism.

Access and Opportunity

New buildings and programs are great, but ultimately pointless without students. Some of our ideas for getting more students in the classroom include:

- Increasing need-based financial aid by \$24 million, including \$6 million to establish a new financial aid grant program for part-time or non-degree students in high-demand, low-pay training programs.
- Expanding UPlan, a savings program administered by the Massachusetts Education Financing Authority, to encourage greater participation from low- and moderate-income families.
- Re-establishing the “Dual Enrollment” program to provide high school students at risk of dropping out an opportunity to attend community college.

Accountability and Responsibility

Whenever the public's money is spent, the public has a right to expect results. So we are requiring the Board of Higher Education and the UMass Board of Trustees to make annual assessments of each campus' progress toward these goals. But we are also taking the concept of accountability to another level. We want everyone, *everyone*, to feel responsible for the success of our public higher education system. Sink or swim, fly or fall, no matter how you say it, our Commonwealth, indeed, our common future, is tied to the fate of public higher education.

A college education can no longer be considered a luxury. It is a necessity, and our strategy reflects that reality. Restoring a world-class shine to our public higher education system will require sustained commitment, physical and financial, from legislators and private citizens alike. But putting the public back in public education by investing more time and tax dollars sends the right message. Money alone will not solve all problems, but perpetual cutting certainly doesn't help either. By investing more in public higher education we, as a society, will show our education professionals and our students that we value their work, and that we expect results. Continuing to tell professors, administrators and students to do more with less makes achieving high standards virtually impossible.

The bottom line is education doesn't cost. It pays. Anyone who has invested in their own education knows this. An educated workforce earns higher salaries, which stimulates economic activity, which puts more tax dollars into the system, which enables us to continue investing in an educated workforce. Plus, a high-quality, second-to-none education system will better enable us to address the other challenges our state faces, from soaring health care costs to environmental preservation. These problems will be much harder to solve if we deny our children the best education possible.

Education is vital for our economic prosperity, and public higher education is the fuel that powers the engine. After all, 67 percent of all Massachusetts high school graduates that go on to college attend a state-supported campus, and more than 85 percent of our public higher education graduates stay and work in Massachusetts. Like water, our homegrown students are a life-sustaining renewable resource.

But there's more to it than just preparing people to take their place in the economy. Education also holds the key to our civic and cultural prosperity. Each generation is responsible for preparing successive generations to be good citizens, to be active participants in all levels of their government, in their communities, in their schools, and so on. It is our duty, our sacred duty, to make the sacrifices necessary to prepare them well.

Higher education in the Americas began in Massachusetts. It would be a shame if our generation made it history.

The complete text of the Task Force Report is available here:
http://www.mass.gov/legis/reports/public_higher_ed_taskforce_report.htm

Noteworthy

Stem cell research

The House and Senate have passed bills concerning stem cell research and the members of the conference committee have begun informal discussions to work out the differences between the two versions. Here is a summary of the Senate bill.

The bill clarifies the Legislature's support and encouragement of stem cell and other regenerative medical research in Massachusetts, creates a licensing and oversight mechanism for institutions conducting stem cell research, requires informed and voluntary consent from donors, prohibits human reproductive cloning and provides criminal penalties for violations of the bill.

The bill:

- allows stem cell research, clinical applications and somatic cell nuclear transplantation in the Commonwealth, and clarifies language that forbids experimentation on human fetuses;
- prohibits: human reproductive cloning; selling or buying a donated embryo; transferring a donated embryo to a uterus; and using an embryo in scientific research or experimentation without prior approval of an institutional review board ("IRB") of a hospital or other institution.. The bill provides criminal penalties for violations;
- requires that stem cell research can only take place in institutions which have IRBs. These IRBs must review and approve, in writing, every embryonic project before it is begun and at least once per year, thereafter;
- requires that an institution obtain a license from the department of public health before conducting somatic cell nuclear transfer procedures of experimentation;
- requires each institution conducting stem cell research to file annual reports to the newly-created Stem Cell Research Advisory Board. This board, composed of 7 members appointed by the Governor, the President of the Senate and, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, shall hold public meetings at least twice per year and will provide an annual report on the state of stem cell research and any recommended regulatory changes to the Governor and the Legislature. Anyone conducting stem cell research must file reports summarizing such research to this board annually;
- requires that infertility health care providers provide patients with information about their options for disposing, donating and storing unused embryos;
- requires that embryos and other genetic material can only be used for stem cell research with the informed consent of the donor;
- provides "whistle-blower" protection to employees who detect and report violations of the provisions of the bill, and prohibits employers from requiring employees with bona fide religious objections to conduct stem cell research;

- states the findings and declarations of the Legislature of the extraordinary potential for benefit to mankind in stem cell research and other regenerative technologies;
- declares that the Commonwealth's policy is to foster research, therapies and clinical applications in regenerative medicine, including those involving stem cells, human embryonic germ cells, placental and umbilical cord cells, human adult stem cells and somatic cell nuclear transplantation, and further, that the Commonwealth's policy is to prohibit human reproductive cloning.

Roundup

Fiscal note

State tax collections totaled \$1.557 billion in March, an increase of \$187 million or almost 14 percent over March 2004, according to state revenue officials. Fiscal year to date, tax revenues total \$11.913 billion, an increase of \$759 million or 6.8 percent over the same period last year. All tax types were up in March except sales and use taxes. Income tax collections for March totaled \$478 million, a 19 percent increase from last March. Withholding tax collections were up 9.2 percent from last March, totaling \$669 million. Corporate and business tax collections were \$643 million. Sales and use taxes were down \$1 million, totaling \$281 million. Tax collections are running \$262 million above a budget benchmark revised last October.

FYI

The Pioneer Valley Post Carbon Council is presenting *The End of Suburbia* on Tuesday, April 12th, 7-9 pm at the GCC Main Campus, Stinchfield Lecture Hall (north wing of the main building). After the movie, Don Campbell will lead a discussion to answer questions and to present the work of the Pioneer Valley Post Carbon Council, an outpost of the Post Carbon Institute. For more information call 413-498-0027.

Annual event

I will be hosting my annual event on Friday, May 13th, from 5-7 pm at The Hickory Ridge County Club. Hope to see you there!

Trivia

Now for the answer to our previous question -- The Boston Latin School, the oldest public school in the U.S., graduated which signer of the Declaration of Independence:

- 1) Elbridge Gerry
- 2) John Hancock
- 3) Sam Adams

The answer is: John Hancock and/or Sam Adams. Both were graduates and both were signers, so we accepted both answers.

And our winner is William M. from somewhere in cyberspace. We'll send William information on who to contact in my Boston office and we'll look forward to seeing him at the State House. Congratulations! And thanks to everybody who played along!

Now to this month's question and another chance to win lunch and a State House tour.

John Kerry received his party's nomination for president in his home state, but did not win the election. Which one of the following presidential candidates met the same fate -- losing the election after accepting the party nomination in his home state?

- 1) George H. W. Bush
- 2) Adlai Stevenson
- 3) Horatio Seymour
- 4) Thomas Dewey

Submit your answer to tumitch@sprynet.com and watch this space for the correct answer and the prize winner.

[Links](#)

Here are a few links. Until next time, happy surfing!

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Guide to Lawmaking -- <http://www.state.ma.us/legis/lawmkng.htm>

Massachusetts State Government Home Page -- <http://mass.gov/>

The Legislature's web page -- <http://www.state.ma.us/legis/>

Senate's Bill Text System -- <http://www.state.ma.us/legis/billsrch.htm>

Legislative Tracking System -- <http://www.state.ma.us/legis/ltsform.htm>

My personal website -- <http://www.stanrosenberg.com/>

The Rosenberg Report (January, 2005, edition) --
<http://www.stanrosenberg.com/issues/jan2005.html>