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# *The Rosenberg Report*

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Hello!

I can't tell you how pleased I am that the Senate is kicking off the new session with a major public higher education bill. It's no secret that whenever money is tight and it's time to cut, public higher education is a popular item on Beacon Hill. For example, during our latest fiscal crisis -- between 2002 and 2004 -- we cut public higher education by 32.6 percent, the largest reduction in the nation. We are also spending more on incarceration than public higher education and we are the only state in the nation spending less on public higher education today than 10 years ago.

Fortunately, the tide is turning.

It started last year when the Senate created the Task Force on Higher Education. I co-chaired that task force with Senator Steven Panagiotakos (D-Lowell) and we learned, to no one's surprise, that our habitual cutting of higher education has placed the future prosperity of our state in serious jeopardy. The change in attitude was also reflected when the House and Senate restructured their committees and created the Joint Committee on Public Higher Education, giving the issue the kind of legislative forum it never had before.

And now we have a major bill, based on the work of my Task Force, a bill that is front and center on the Legislature's agenda. It's a blueprint to make our public higher education system better and affordable, and to make our future prosperity attainable.

I consider it a great day when the Legislature looks at public higher education with an eye toward building, not tearing down.

Keep the faith,



February Focus

## *Higher Education*

The full Senate today endorsed a bill that would help Massachusetts build an “innovation economy” by fulfilling a 7-year funding commitment to public higher education

and establishing high-tech job creation and the preservation of access and affordability as higher education's primary goals.

The bill, "An Act Supporting Access and Excellence in Public Higher Education," is based on a blueprint created last year by the Senate's Task Force on Higher Education, which I co-chaired with Steven Panagiotakos (D-Lowell), vice chair of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means.

The Task Force concluded that because Massachusetts has few natural resources, limited agriculture and an ever-shrinking manufacturing sector, and because every other state is focusing on public higher education, and, along with countries like China and India, are making great economic strides with high-tech innovations, the future prosperity of the Commonwealth depends on innovation.

Innovation requires education, and education must be accessible and affordable to everyone. The sooner we realize that, and commit to making it happen, the better off we'll be.

The bill is designed to build on the existing public higher education 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 to workforce development and high-tech job creation. Here are just a few specific proposals:

#### *Money and More Money*

- Investing approximately \$400 million, adjusted for inflation, over 7 years to fully fund the formulas established by the Board of Higher Education and the UMass President's office in the 1990s to calculate each campus' annual operating needs.
- Authorizing each public campus to establish a "rainy day fund," known as the Student Charges Stabilization Fund, consisting of a minimum contribution from their annual budgets.
- Allowing each campus to carry over to the next fiscal year 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. The Commonwealth 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, the bill proposes:

- Providing \$15 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 each University campus in creating business and high-tech incubators.
- Creating a workforce development task force within the Board of Higher Education to help state and community colleges work more closely with the private sector to identify job creation needs and workforce development trends.
- Investing an initial \$3 million as seed money to add or expand degree and certificate programs in such growth areas as health care, education – especially early childhood – technology and tourism.

#### Access and Affordability

Some of the bill's proposals for getting more students in the classroom include:

- Capping the annual growth in student charges to the three-year average in inflation.
- Allowing each campus to retain tuition. Under current law tuition reverts to the state's general fund.
- 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, \$8 million for a loan forgiveness program for those who enter high-demand/low-pay professions, and \$10 million in additional scholarship aid.
- Requiring the Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority to develop a plan to encourage greater participation from low- and moderate-income families in its higher education savings program UPlan.
- Appropriating \$2 million to re-establish the "Dual Enrollment" program to provide high school students at risk of dropping out an opportunity to attend community college.

#### Accountability and Responsibility

Some of the bill's proposals for improving accountability and responsibility include:

- Requiring that vacant positions on boards of trustees be publicly advertised.
- Establishing a set of qualifications the nominating council should consider when making recommendations.

- Fine-tuning performance measurement and accountability systems to make evaluations of public higher education institutions and their progress toward the goals of the bill more useful to the public.
- Requiring the Board of Higher Education and the UMass Board of Trustees to make public annual assessments of each campus' progress toward the goals of the bill.

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.

### Noteworthy

#### *2006 Municipal Conference, Saturday, April 1st*

**SAVE THE DATE:** This year's conference is scheduled for **Saturday, April 1st**, at The Clarion Hotel and Conference Center in Northampton. I've teamed up again with the Franklin and Hampshire Councils of Governments to bring you a slightly different program this time.

This year, we're focusing on local aid. You might know that the Municipal Finance Task Force, a group of business and community leaders, state and local officials and academics, and a group sponsored by the Massachusetts Municipal Association, have each released studies on the broad topic of local aid and have made suggestions about how this state-local partnership might be improved. We're inviting some members of those groups to come out and discuss their findings and recommendations. After that, we'll break up into the usual individual sessions to carry on an even more focused discussion. The day will look like this:

7:30 am	—	Registration, Refreshments
8:15 am	—	Welcoming Remarks
8:30-10 am	—	Plenary Session: <i>The Future of Local Aid</i>
10:15-11:45 am	—	Break out sessions

#### *Education: Chapter 70*

#### *Transportation & Construction: Chapter 90*

#### *Municipal Aid: PILOT, Lottery, Local Options*

#### *Planning & Development: Growth and Revenues*

#### *Department of Revenue Seminar: Local Budget Development*

Noon	—	Lunch
12:30 pm	—	Keynote Address
1:30 pm	—	Conference Ends

We're still working out some of the details, and we'll have more information in the coming weeks, but this is the direction we're heading this year. So, save the date: **Saturday, April 1st**, at The Clarion Hotel and Conference Center in Northampton.

## [Round-up](#)

### *Summer employment*

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) is gearing up to hire seasonal employees to assist in the operation of state parks and recreation areas across the Commonwealth. To participate in the Seasonal Training and Employment Program, Massachusetts residents age 16 and older should contact their state senator to acquire the necessary forms. The forms must be completed and returned to the senator's office by Monday, April 10th.

For job descriptions and minimum requirements, click here . . .

Department of Conservation and Recreation  
[www.state.ma.us/dcr/](http://www.state.ma.us/dcr/)

### *Hallmark Institute of Photography*

Congratulations to everybody at the Hallmark Institute of Photography in Turners Falls, who celebrated the institute's grand opening late last month. Back in October I hosted in my State House office an exhibit of photographs from Hallmark Institute students and it was incredibly well-received by my colleagues and visitors. They are doing some remarkable things at the Hallmark Institute. Click here to find out more . . .

Hallmark Institute of Photography  
<http://hallmark.edu/>

### *League of Women Voters Essay Contest*

The Massachusetts League of Women Voters is sponsoring an On-line Student Essay Contest for all Massachusetts students in grades 4-12. This year's theme is *Making Democracy Work: Our Bill of Rights*. The deadline is March 15, 2006. For complete contest information, click here . . .

League of Women Voters of Massachusetts  
[www.lwvma.org](http://www.lwvma.org)

### *State grants*

Here are a few grants that have come our way recently:

The Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities awarded the Emily Dickinson Museum a \$2,917 grant to support its project, "The Poets light but Lamps: A Viewing and Discussion of *The Belle of Amherst* and Modern Perceptions of a Major Poet."

The Emily Dickinson Museum  
[www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org](http://www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org)

Greenfield Housing Authority -- \$100,000 from the Department of Housing and Community Development's "American Dream Downpayment Initiative" program for qualified first-time homebuyers.

The Massachusetts Cultural Council awarded the following Adams Arts Program for Cultural Economic Development Program grants:

\$50,000 to Museums 10 and Go Dutch! in Amherst;  
\$40,000 to Greater Franklin County Fostering Arts and Culture, in  
Greenfield;  
\$42,500 to RiverCulture in Turners Falls.

These grants are designed to stimulate the economy and create jobs.

Massachusetts Cultural Council  
<http://www.massculturalcouncil.org/>

The Executive Office of Environmental Affairs awarded the city of Northampton a \$65,000 Urban Brownfields Site Assessment Program grant.

The Department of Housing and Community Development awarded DialSelf in Greenfield a \$537,500 zero-interest loan from the Housing Innovations Fund Program.

### Trivia

Now for the answer to our previous question:

Who was the last Massachusetts governor to serve in a cabinet level position?

The answer is: John Volpe, who served as Secretary of Transportation in the Nixon administration

And our winner is Allen B. from somewhere in cyberspace. We'll send Allen 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:

Who was the schoolmaster of the first public secondary school in America, The Boston Latin Grammar School, established in 1635?

Submit your answer to [tumitch@sprynet.com](mailto:tumitch@sprynet.com) and watch this space for the correct answer and the prize winner.

### Links

Here are a few links. Until next time . . .

Join TeamRosenberg! <http://www.stanrosenberg.com/teamrosenberg.php>

Click here [tumitch@sprynet.com](mailto:tumitch@sprynet.com) if you want to be removed from our list.

Click here for our on-line feedback form [www.stanrosenberg.com/form.html](http://www.stanrosenberg.com/form.html)

Forward this link to a friend [www.stanrosenberg.com/issues/rosenreportreg.html](http://www.stanrosenberg.com/issues/rosenreportreg.html)

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 (December, 2005, edition) --  
<http://www.stanrosenberg.com/issues/dec2005.html>