

# The Rosenberg Report



## January Focus

Hello,

I am so pleased to report that one of my proudest accomplishments has reached a significant milestone.

The Cultural Facilities Fund (CFF), a program that provides public investments in our state's cultural treasures, which I championed for years and finally helped create in 2006/07, has provided \$50 million in grants to arts and cultural non-profits.

The idea that motivated the creation of the program is, I believe, as valid today as it was when I initially launched the effort: Such investment is justified



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because of the enormous contributions the arts make to our state's economy.

There's no question that arts and cultural facilities feed our economy. They are tools for economic development and community revitalization. But the arts also encourage creative thinking and free expression. And that feeds the soul and, ultimately, helps strengthen our democracy.

Anita Walker, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Cultural Council, said: "As we reach this milestone, we have many reasons around the Commonwealth to celebrate. Even through a recession, the Cultural Facilities Fund has been driving investment, creating jobs and providing needed capital support to protect, preserve and even expand both small and large nonprofit arts, science and history institutions."

More than 200 nonprofits have received CFF grants since 2007, using the funds directly for preservation, safety and other facility improvements. In all cases, funding from the CFF has been used to leverage additional contributions from the public and private sectors. Investment by the Governor and Legislature into the Cultural Facilities Fund has leveraged more than \$837 million in additional support, while providing work for more than 10,000 architects, engineers, contractors and construction workers and creating 1,163 new permanent jobs at the completion of the capital projects.

"It's difficult to look around the Commonwealth and find a community whose arts and cultural organizations have not been touched by CFF grants," said Paul Grogan, President of the Boston Foundation, which partnered in the launch the Campaign for Cultural Facilities. "For five years, this grant program has provided funding for improvements that expand the reach and impact of arts, science and history organizations from Boston to the Berkshires."

[Stan's website](#)

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A list of the prior grant recipients and descriptions of their projects can be found on the Massachusetts Cultural Council [website](#), including the following western Mass. programs that received the very first CFF grants in September of 2007:

- National Yiddish Book Center - \$352,000
- Amherst Cinema - \$675,000
- Emily Dickinson House - \$28,500
- Available Potential Enterprises, Ltd. (Northampton) - \$18,750

Whenever there is good news about arts funding I am reminded of something John Adams, our second president, wrote in a letter to his wife, Abigail: "I must study politics and war that my sons may have liberty to study mathematics . . . and agriculture . . . in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music . . ."

I believe that what Adams was saying is that as societies mature, their priorities broaden, expanding from the only practical to embrace the purely spiritual and intellectual. And that is where we are today - socially mature enough and economically stable enough to recognize and invest in the intrinsic value of the arts.

But this is not simply art for art's sake. This is art for democracy's sake. And a pretty good way to start the New Year.

Yours,



## Congressman McGovern to Keynote 2012 Municipal Conference

I am pleased to announce that [Congressman James McGovern](#) has agreed to be the keynote speaker at this year's Conference for Municipal Officials on Saturday,

March 31st at The Clarion Hotel and Conference Center in Northampton.

I am also please that [State Representative Jay Kaufman](#), D-Lexington, House Chair of the Revenue Committee and member of the [Tax Expenditure Commission](#), will open the conference that morning with a discussion of "Revenue and Tax Expenditure Reform in the Commonwealth."

I have once again teamed up with the Hampshire and Franklin Councils of Governments to present this year's program, which will feature a variety of panel discussions and a sandwich buffet lunch, along with remarks from Congressman McGovern, to top things off.

We are still working out the program, but please save the date and stand by for more details!

[2012 Conference for Municipal Officials](#)

## Senate Passes Education Collaboratives Reform

The Senate earlier this month took decisive action to end mismanagement and financial abuses at the Commonwealth's education collaboratives, which help teach children with special needs. With a unanimous vote, the Senate passed legislation that establishes strict oversight and accountability of the state's 30 institutions.

State officials and the public called for immediate action after investigations last year by the state auditor and inspector general uncovered a serious misuse of funding at the Merrimack Special Education Collaborative and other collaboratives around the state.

It is important to note that the [Collaborative for Educational Services](#) - formerly the Hampshire Education Collaborative - based in Northampton, was not part of those investigations.

The legislation will improve the governance and fiscal accountability of the Commonwealth's network of educational collaboratives by increasing transparency and setting clear standards to ensure that funding for the collaboratives will be used specifically for direct services to students.

Each collaborative will be managed by a board of directors consisting of one person appointed annually by each member school committee or member charter

school board, plus one member appointed by the education commissioner. The bill addresses the conflicts of interest surrounding collaboratives and their related nonprofit organizations, through which many of the abuses took place, creating clear requirements for board members and staff.

It prohibits board members from receiving a salary and from serving in any official capacity at a related nonprofit organization.

Further establishing financial oversight and accountability, the bill requires the board of directors to appoint a treasurer who is not a member of the board or an employee of the collaborative. The bill also requires collaboratives to maintain a financial accounting system and authorizes the state education department, auditor and department of revenue to periodically audit or review the records of every education collaborative.

The boards of each education collaborative will also be required to prepare an annual financial report and conduct an independent audit, which will be made publicly available online. Each board must file its annual report and audit with the state education commissioner, auditor, and each member school committee and charter school board.

Related nonprofits must also submit annual audited financial statements to the Attorney General or the state education department. And, the bill makes explicit that collaboratives are subject to the same competitive bidding requirements that school districts must follow when contracting for goods and services.

Other oversight measures put in place by the bill include:

- Requiring board members to complete a training developed by the state education department on the duties and responsibilities of board members;
- Requiring education collaboratives to conform to the new law within 12 months of the effective date of the act;
- Mandating that each collaborative maintain a public website, including a list of board members, copies of the board meeting minutes, and a copy of the collaborative's founding written agreement with the state; and
- Creating a commission to study the role of collaboratives relative to the state's K-12 education system and to make recommendations in such areas as services to individuals age 22 and above and the appropriate relationship, if any, between education collaboratives and related organizations.

The bill now goes to the House of Representatives for further action.

The Senate on January 12th, passed legislation establishing new employment rights for victims of domestic violence that will help victims keep their jobs and increase long-term economic productivity. The vote was 34-0. The bill has wide support from advocacy organizations and the business community.

The bill requires employers with 50 or more employees to allow up to 15 days of leave, with or without pay, to any employee who is a victim of domestic violence or lives with a family member who is a victim of domestic violence.

Employees can use the leave to obtain medical attention, counseling, housing, protection orders and other legal assistance.

Employers can require employees to provide restraining orders, police reports, medical notes or other official documentation, such as a conviction record or victim advocate statement, to certify that the employee or employee's family member is a victim of domestic violence.

The bill requires the employer to keep all information about the employee's leave confidential. Employees must exhaust all available leave, such as vacation and sick time, before seeking leave established under this bill; however an employer may waive this requirement.

Similar legislation was passed by the Senate in the previous legislative session on May 13, 2010 but did not make it through the entire legislative process. It has the support of Jane Doe Inc., the Associated Industries of Massachusetts and the Retailers' Association of Massachusetts.

The bill now goes to the House of Representatives.

## Artist on Display

Throughout the year, I use my office at the State House to showcase the artwork of photographers and other visual artists from western Massachusetts.



For the next several weeks, a few paintings by Shelburne Falls artist [Jo-Anne Sherburne](#) will be on display.

Visit my [Art on Display](#) page for samples of her work.

## Roundup

### *Find Stan on Facebook*

I'm always looking for more Facebook friends. If you're interested, please check out my page and sign up!

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### *Governor Patrick's Fiscal '13 Budget Proposal*

On January 25th, Governor Patrick releases his administration's budget proposal for fiscal year 2013.

[Governor's Fiscal '13 budget proposal](#)

### *Federal Grants - Race to the Top*

On December 16, 2011, the Patrick-Murray Administration announced that Massachusetts is one of nine grant award winners in President Obama's Early Learning Challenge (ELC) competition and will receive significant funding over the next four years to expand high quality early education services and close achievement gaps in education.

Massachusetts is eligible for \$50 million under the ELC and the U.S. Department of Education will announce final grant amounts to each winner in the coming days.

The ELC is part of President Obama's Race to the Top initiative, which Massachusetts won in 2010, receiving \$250 million to implement landmark reforms in public education. The U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services made \$500 million available nationally in the Early Learning Challenge to encourage states to develop bold and comprehensive plans for improving the quality of early learning programs across the nation. Thirty-five states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico applied for this groundbreaking reform grant.

The Commonwealth's plan, *From Birth to School Readiness: Massachusetts Early Learning Plan, 2012-2015*, represents extensive community outreach and input on best practices and key strategies for moving forward early education outcomes. The ELC grant will support the Commonwealth's continued work across the education and health and human services sectors to build strong foundations for our youngest citizens.

#### *State Grants - Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities Program*

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs has awarded the following grants from the Parkland Acquisitions and Renovations for Communities (PARC) Program:

- Amherst -- Community Field Rehabilitation - \$208,320 for the installation of a pool liner, new concrete decking, fencing and lighting for safety, new drain lines and piping to fix significant water leaks, replacement of the filtration system and upgrades to the filter house, new benches, lifeguard chairs, shade structures, water fountains and improvements to the pool house.
- Northampton -- Florence Recreation Fields - \$500,000 for the development of a new park that includes five multi-use fields, one 60-foot baseball diamond and one 90-foot baseball diamond, a parking lot, a multi-purpose path along the property, playground, pavilion, restrooms and a concession and storage building.

#### *State Grants - Land Conservation*

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs has awarded the following land conservation grants:

- Leverett - Teawaddle Hill Farm - \$237,600 to preserve a 147-acre farm, which has been active for over 200 years, through the purchase of a

conservation restriction. The farmers have been restoring the property, currently raising cattle and producing maple syrup. The farm includes 40 acres of open pasture, 100 acres of woodland, a sugarbush, and wetlands. This project forms an important connection between adjacent conservation lands, and is classified as BioMap2 Core Habitat. Multiple project partners have come together for this project, including the town of Leverett, The Kestrel Land Trust, and The Rattlesnake Gutter Trust. Trails and woods roads run throughout the property and will be open to the public for low impact recreation.

- Northampton - Mineral Hills Bookends Project - \$408,960 for a 96-acre project that consists of two parcels at high-risk for development and will add to Northampton's highly popular Mineral Hills Conservation Area. The southern six-acre "bookend" is a parcel that was cleared for a house lot. The lot will be restored and the road discontinued after city acquisition. The larger 90-acre northern parcel includes wetlands, woodland, and Biomap 2 Critical Natural Landscape. This project will add to the trail network of this growing conservation block spanning the Northampton-Westhampton border, and will be open to the public for passive recreational use.

#### *State Grants - Peer-to-Peer Technical Assistance Program*

On January 3rd, the Town of Leverett received a \$1,000 Peer-to-Peer Technical Assistance program grant to cover 30 hours of computer technical assistance that will be provided to the town by a systems administrator for the Town of Amherst.

#### *State Grants - Volunteer Fire Assistance Grants*

The following communities have received Volunteer Fire Assistance Grants from the Department of Conservation and Recreation:

- Leverett - \$580
- New Salem - \$2,000
- Shutesbury - \$437
- Sunderland - \$700
- Whately - \$2,000
- Turners Falls - \$1,974
- Erving - \$1,987
- South Hadley - \$1,140

## Trivia

Now for the answer to our previous question:

The Religious Society of Friends, informally known as Quakers, has a long history in Massachusetts and throughout New England.

What does the word *Quaker* mean in this context?

The answer is: "to tremble in the way of the Lord."

And our winner is: Joan P. from cyberspace

Now for another chance to win:

In 1908, Bostonian Julia Ward Howe became the first woman  
elected to the Academy of Arts and Letters.

She was also famous for writing the words to a popular song,  
first published in 1862.

Name the song Julia Ward Howe wrote.

Submit your answer to our  
[TriviaMaster](#)

who will select our winner at random.

Thanks for playing!

Parting thought . . .

"We must never forget that art is not a form of propaganda;  
it is a form of truth."

John F. Kennedy