



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

MASSACHUSETTS BLACK AND LATINO LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS

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**The Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative Caucus’ Fiscal Year 2015
Budget Victories**

SENATOR

SEN. LINDA DORCENA FORRY
1ST SUFFOLK DISTRICT

Boston, July 2014: The Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative Caucus (MBLLC) celebrated several victories in the Fiscal Year 2015 (FY15) state budget, which was passed by the House and Senate this week and now awaiting the Governor’s signature. This year, the MBLLC identified 18 budget priorities that mirrored the Caucus’ 2013-2014 legislative session priorities: civil rights, public safety, health, education, jobs, economic development, housing, and culture.

REPRESENTATIVES

REP. BYRON RUSHING
9TH SUFFOLK DISTRICT

REP. GLORIA L. FOX
7TH SUFFOLK DISTRICT

1. Committee for Public Counsel Services Competitive Salaries (CPCS) (0321-1500)– This line item saw a \$5M increase over the previous year for CPCS legal aid services to indigent persons who have a right to a public defender in criminal and civil court cases and administrative proceedings.

REP. BENJAMIN SWAN
11TH HAMPDEN DISTRICT

REP. JEFFREY SANCHEZ
15TH SUFFOLK DISTRICT

2. Massachusetts Legal Assistance Cooperation (0321-1600)– This line item saw a \$2M increase over the previous year for the delivery of high-quality legal assistance for low-income individuals and families in the greater Boston area. This line item provides important legal access for many families navigating through the civil courts system.

REP. AARON VEGA
5TH HAMPDEN DISTRICT

REP. EVANDRO CARVAHLO
5TH SUFFOLK DISTRICT

3. Massachusetts Cultural Council (0640-0300)– This line item saw a \$3.9M increase over the previous year for the delivery of the arts, sciences, and humanities to residents of the Commonwealth. Funds also help to provide grants to local artists and bring educational programming to school districts whose art education budgets have been eliminated.

4. Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD) (0940-0100)– This line item saw a \$250,000 increase over the previous year for the state's chief civil rights agency. The MCAD oversees many constituent’s complaints regarding discrimination on a variety of bases, including race, creed, gender, religious background, and sexual orientation. The agency helps resolve discrimination cases outside of the more expensive and judicial system.

5. Early Education Department (3000-1000)– This line item saw a \$520,000 increase over the previous year for the oversight and monitoring of early learning and development programs, as well as the delivery of licensing technical assistance. This funding helps to ensure the safety, well-being, and success of young children enrolled in state-assisted child care centers.

6. Safe and Successful Youth Initiative (4000-0005)– This line item saw a \$600,000 increase over the previous year for youth violence prevention program grants administered by the Executive Office of Health and Human Services. The communities represented by members of the Caucus are deeply affected by gang activity, teenage violence, and drug related crimes. SSI has been proven to help curb incidents of violence, and therefore funding it at this funding level is critical.

7. **L. D. Brown Peace Institute (4513-1098)**– This line item was leveled funded at \$150,000 for trauma supports and resources for over 500 survivors of violence, as well as families impacted by violence.
8. **Teen Pregnancy Prevention (4530-9000)**– This line item saw a \$14,000 increase over the previous year for teenage pregnancy prevention services. Funding these programs is cost-effective as it keeps young people in school and out of more expensive state systems.
9. **YouthWorks (7002-0012)** – This line item saw a \$1.2M increase over the previous year for youth jobs that are a key component to keeping young people on a positive and hopeful pathway and preventing them from becoming crime-involved as a means of employment. These opportunities allow for youth to gain critical skills and work experience through paid positions.
10. **Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (7004-9024)**– This line item saw a \$7.5M increase over the previous year for rental assistance for low-income families and elderly persons through mobile and project-based vouchers, which is an efficient way to meet goal of keeping people in housing rather than shelter.
11. **Adult Basic Education (7035-0002)**– This line item saw a \$200,000 increase over the previous year for education and workforce development programs for tens of thousands of adult residents. These services provide adult learners with the skills they need to contribute to our communities and economy and ultimately prevent the need for other, more costly social supports.
12. **Charter School Reimbursements (7061-9010)**– This line item saw a \$5M increase over the previous year for reimbursements that will help prevent resources from being siphoned from traditional district schools.
13. **Mass Mentoring Partnership Inc. (7061-9634)** – This line item saw a \$50,000 increase over the previous year for youth mentoring programs that help youth develop academic performance, self-esteem, social competence, and workforce development skills, thus increasing the odds that youth will graduate high school and attend college.
14. **Shannon Grants (8100-0111)**– This line item saw a \$1.2M increase over the previous year for critical regional and multi-disciplinary violence prevention and intervention programming. The Senate increase of \$3,000,000 will allow Shannon Grants to help curb violence in our communities by targeting gangs, inmates, and juveniles reintegrating, and programs that provide youth supervised out-of-school-time activities.

Additionally, the MBLLC pushed for several other important initiatives, which unfortunately were not adopted into the FY15 conference committee budget:

- Section 9A in the final Senate budget, which aimed to codify the Office of Access and Opportunity under Administration and Finance, which is tasked with advancing equal opportunity hiring practices across state agencies and state contracts.
- Senate Amendment #659, which repealed automatic driver’s license suspension for non-driving related drug offenses and cleans up the driving records of individuals whose licenses were suspended in the past for drug offenses. This outside section would have removed hurdles for formerly incarcerated people that interfere with a released individual’s access to employment, medical and drug treatment, and crucial family supports.
- House Amendment #414, which created an on-line application and centralized homelessness waitlist to ease the process for applicants applying to state-aided public housing.
- House Amendment #466, which would have continued the MBTA’s Key Bus Routes improvement project, which was launched to help reduce travel time; enhance comfort, convenience, safety and accessibility.

The MBLLC will continue to meet with their colleagues and community leaders to spread awareness and garner support for these important initiatives.

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