

Massachusetts House Minority Leader

Bradley H. Jones, Jr.

Proudly Representing the 20th Middlesex District



What's Going On At The State House?

May 2009

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Dear Friends,

Welcome to the May edition of "What's Going on at the State House," an e-mail newsletter I write to stay in touch with you and keep you posted on what I'm working on in the Legislature and in the 20th Middlesex District.

There was a lot happening on Beacon Hill in May as the Senate took up its version of the budget. The budget passed by the Senate was significantly smaller than the House's version due to the huge decline in revenue collections. Unfortunately, both the House and Senate approved a measure to increase the state's sales tax from 5% to 6.25%, a move I do not support. Both budgets are headed to conference committee and then the final version will be submitted to the Governor by the end of June.

Speaking of conference committees, the respective committees on pension and transportation began meeting in May. Both committees have the potential to create real reform and take steps forward to restore the public's trust in Beacon Hill officials. I am hopeful the conferees will work hard to make meaningful reform in order to better the state's transportation and pension systems. In addition, the conference committee on ethics reform will start meeting shortly.

Congratulations are in order for the newly elected and re-elected town officials. I look forward to serving with you and assisting you with whatever you may need.

And finally, congratulations and good luck to all graduating seniors. I wish you the best of luck in whatever the future may hold for you!

As always, if you have something on your mind that you would like to share, please contact me at my State House office or send me an e-mail. I look forward to hearing from you.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brad".

Poll Question

Do you believe the economy has hit rock bottom?

[YES](#)

[NO](#)

Results will be available in the next issue.

Results from last month's poll question

Do you support a higher sales tax?

YES 5%

NO 95%

Senate Budget Debate Wraps Up

The Senate wrapped up its budget debate in May, and passed a \$27.35 billion budget, about \$722 million less than what the House passed in April. The Senate budget was based on a tax revenue estimate that was \$1.5 billion less than what the House had predicated on its respective budget.

Unlike the final House budget which did not include a draw from the Stabilization Fund, the Senate maintained its original draw of \$299 million throughout the debate.

While both the House and Senate final budgets increase the sales tax from 5% to 6.25%, raising roughly \$900 million, the Senate does not include meals within the increase. The new meals tax adopted was 5%. Additionally, both final budgets dedicate \$300 million of the sales tax revenue to transportation.

Finally, the Senate allocated \$865 million to unrestricted local aid, whereas the House committed just over \$1 billion.

The Budget Conference Committee is expected to begin meeting soon to hash out the details before submitting the final version to the Governor. Governor Patrick has vowed to veto any budget containing an increase to the sales tax, but only time will tell whether or not that will happen.

Conference Committees Meeting

Conference Committees for Pension and Transportation Reform began meeting in May. Both committees are facing a challenging road ahead as our state's residents are eager to see major reforms accomplished in both areas.

There is a tremendous opportunity to save the Commonwealth hundreds of millions of dollars through reforming the current pension and transportation systems.

Several of my amendments were adopted and included in the bills that were sent to conference committees and I hope they will make the final cut. The amendments I offered have the potential to save a significant amount of money while making the state's transportation and pension systems run more efficiently.

I expect to see those final bills sometime in June and will be sure to provide you with the latest information in next month's email update.

Congratulations to Elected Officials

I want to take this opportunity to congratulate all of the re-elected and newly elected town officials. There were many close races this year for various positions throughout my district and I look forward to working with all of you in the future.

Please know that my door is always open and I will do everything I can to help.

Congratulations and Good Luck Graduates

Another school year is winding down and graduating seniors are getting ready to enjoy the commencement festivities. I wish all of the district's graduates the best of luck in their future endeavors and hope they have a safe and happy graduation weekend and summer.

Memorial Day Observances

I was so glad to see so many old friends as well as new faces at the various Memorial Day festivities this year. Memorial Day is a time to show respect to those who have fallen and those currently serving in the armed forces in order to protect our freedoms. Every year, our communities come together behind a united theme of gratitude and each year I am even more proud to be an American. Thank you to everyone who participated in this year's events. It was great to see all of you out in Middleton and North Reading.

Honored at Legislator's Association Dinner

This year, I was honored to be recognized at the Annual Legislator's Association Dinner. My former colleague Representative Mary Rogeness was also honored at this event as well as a handful of other legislators and staff members.

Previous honorees include former Speaker George Keverian and former legislator and Chief of Staff to President George W. Bush Andy Card.

This was a tremendous honor and I look forward to continuing to serve as your State Representative.