

Massachusetts House Minority Leader

**Bradley H. Jones, Jr.**

Proudly Representing the 20th Middlesex District



## What's Going On At The State House?

December 2009

▶ [Web Page Home](#)

▶ [About Brad Jones](#)

▶ [Republican Caucus](#)

▶ [Issues](#)

▶ [Constituent Services](#)

▶ [News Room](#)

▶ [The District](#)

▶ [Contact Brad Jones](#)

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### Dear Friends,

Welcome to the December 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.

I hope you and your families had a wonderful holiday season. With the New Year just days away, I wanted to take this moment to wish all of you a happy and healthy 2010. This past year was certainly a challenging one and though 2010 will bring its share of obstacles, I have great optimism that next year will be better than the last.

This month, each staff member in the House was required to take a furlough in an effort to save the state money. I joined my staff and took a voluntary furlough. As you may now, lawmakers were not constitutionally obligated to take a furlough but in my opinion everyone needs to be sharing in the sacrifice.

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 our economy is on the road to recovery?

[YES](#)

[NO](#)

*Results will be available in the next issue.*

### Results from last month's poll question

This year, will you spend more, less or about the same on your holiday shopping as you did last year?

**MORE 10%**

**LESS 20%**

**SAME 70%**

## House Republicans Join Staff, Take Voluntary Furlough

My colleagues and I in the Republican caucus have joined our staffs by taking a voluntary furlough. This comes after Speaker of the House Robert DeLeo and I announced all House staff would be required to take a five day furlough to help tighten the budget gap.

The members of the House are not constitutionally obligated to take a furlough, however I believe everyone needs to share in the sacrifice as state lawmakers deal with a massive budget shortfall.

My staff works very hard and for limited money and if they can go five days without being paid, it's the least I can do to show them and my constituents I understand the magnitude of this economic crisis. Some of my constituents are working two or three jobs just to make ends meet, while others continue struggling to find employment.

Despite this initiative, I remain disappointed the financial picture has worsened over the last few months saying the Legislature should have been more proactive.

I pushed for a statewide furlough and a number of other cost savings proposals in April because the outlook was bleak. Had we been more proactive then, we may not be in such a horrible situation now. Those ideas were unfortunately rejected in favor of significant tax increases.

## Opportunity to Save Millions Missed

Governor Deval Patrick has missed yet another opportunity to save the Commonwealth tens of millions of dollars.

Governor Patrick recently vetoed section 29 of the most recent supplemental budget that would have created a new mandatory drug repository program and potentially saved millions in prescription drug costs paid by the state's Medicaid program.

Section 29 of the supplemental budget would have created a broad-based recycling program here in Massachusetts that would allow residents and consultant pharmacists in healthcare facilities to return unopened and unexpired prescription drugs.

Similar programs are in place in 37 states across the country. The program I proposed had the potential to save \$20 million annually.

It is important to think outside of the box and come up with innovative ideas that have the potential to lead to savings for the Commonwealth. Here's an alternative solution to the state's problems that does not involve asking the taxpayer to pay more in taxes and fees.

Governor Patrick vetoed the section, saying the Department of Public Health will

examine the possibility of implementing this reform under existing authority.

### **Medicare Part D Open Enrollment Period Concludes**

Enrollment to join Medicare Part D concludes on December 31st. Details about the specific plans in each region are available at [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov) and by calling 1-800-MEDICARE.

If you are unsure about the plan you are currently enrolled in, now is the time to review and make a change if needed. Sometimes plans drop previously covered medications from their formularies, leaving the beneficiary without coverage for that medication. It is important to review your Part D coverage each year for such changes.

A Social Worker or SHINE (Serving Health Information Needs of Elders Program) volunteer is available to provide assistance in reviewing the options. Please contact 1-800-243-4636 for personal assistance or to make an appointment.

### **Meadow Walk Project to Receive Stimulus Funds**

The Meadow Walk of Lynnfield economic development project is set to receive \$5.9 million in federal stimulus funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The ARRA funds, pending approval by the Metropolitan Planning Organization, will provide critical traffic signal and intersection improvements in the area surrounding the Meadow Walk project, a 203-acre redevelopment of the former Colonial Golf Club site in Lynnfield.

The Meadow Walk at Lynnfield project will redevelop the former Colonial Golf Club site and build much needed affordable housing. The project will also create new jobs and tax revenue for the Lynnfield community.

### **Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day**

Sixty eight years ago, the American Army and Navy base in Pearl Harbor was attacked by the Imperial Japanese Navy. The attack, which came as a surprise, claimed the lives of more than 2,000 Americans and another 1,000 were injured. On December 7th, we remember and honor those military men and women who lost their lives on that Sunday morning many years ago. We observed Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day in December and I want to offer my sincerest gratitude and appreciation to the service men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice. We thank you and we honor you.

### **Afternoon with Constituents**

This month, I had the opportunity to spend some quality time with a few Reading constituents. I took the winners of the Team Trivia Night and Auction out on a personal tour of the State House followed by lunch.

Patrick, Allison and Daniel Tompkins of Reading won the tour and lunch at the Team Trivia Night and Auction that was held at the Wakefield Elks Club. The event raised money for the Jimmy Fund.

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