



*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1054

**AARON VEGA**  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
5th HAMPDEN DISTRICT

June 13, 2018

The Honorable William C. Galvin  
Chair, House Committee on Rules  
State House, Room 166  
Boston, MA, 02133

Dear Chairman Galvin:

We write to request that the House Committee on Rules report favorably on *An Act Modernizing the Foundation Budget for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (S.2525) and bring the bill to the House floor expeditiously.

As you know well, school district budgets across the state have experienced steady erosion over the nearly two decades since Chapter 70 was fully implemented. Between FY02 and FY18, Chapter 70 funding declined by nearly 9% when adjusted for inflation. As a result, we are seeing larger class sizes, fewer wraparound services, and a reduction or elimination of access to foreign languages, arts, and extracurricular activities, despite our constitutional responsibility to “cherish” our education system.

This is particularly acute in districts that do not have the local wealth to subsidize the state’s underfunding and has resulted in our having among the worst achievement gaps in the country. But even in cities and towns with the local tax base to make up the shortfalls, municipalities must shift their resources from other priorities like affordable housing, public safety, elder services, and transportation. This under-resourcing of our schools is now threatening the priorities our constituents far beyond the walls of a classroom.

In response to years of advocacy from school districts, parents, educators, and students, the Legislature established the Foundation Budget Review Commission (FBRC) to recommend improvements to the current formula. This bill directly reflects those bipartisan, unanimous recommendations and will modernize our foundation budget with regard to special education students, low-income students, English learners, and employee and retiree healthcare costs.

The consensus around this bill is something that hasn’t been seen in decades, and every legislative session we wait to enact this bill means another two classes of students who finish their school careers without ever having access to the resources they deserve. We urge you to report the bill out as soon as possible, so that we may finally—25 years into Education Reform—ensure that our investment in our schools matches our expectations of our schools.

CC: The Honorable Robert DeLeo, Speaker of the House of Representatives  
Chairman Jeffrey Sánchez, House Committee on Ways and Means

Sincerely,

Aaron Vega  
State Representative

Sean Garballey  
State Representative

Committees:  
Vice Chair, Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities  
Higher Education  
Labor and Workforce Development  
Marijuana Policy  
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Ruth Balsler  
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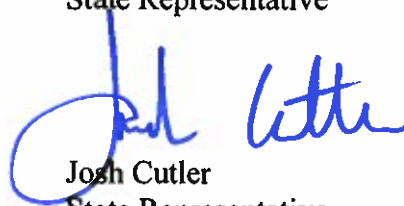
Christine Barber  
State Representative



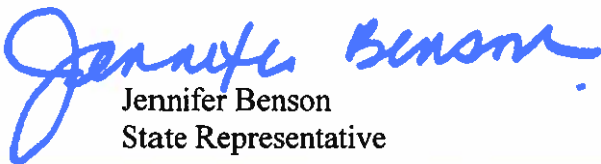
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Paul Brodeur  
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Geoff Diehl  
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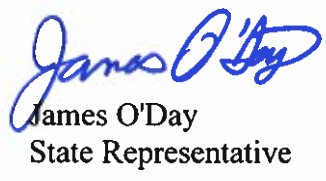
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Diana DiZoglio  
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Joseph McKenna  
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Kelko Orrall  
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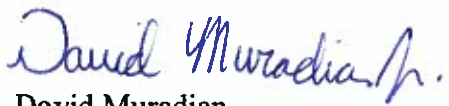
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David Muradian  
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Matthew Muratore  
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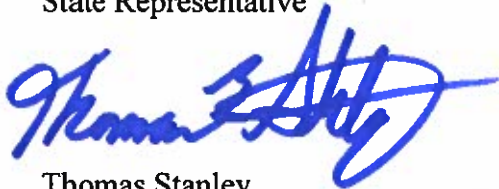
Jack Lewis  
State Representative



Todd Smola  
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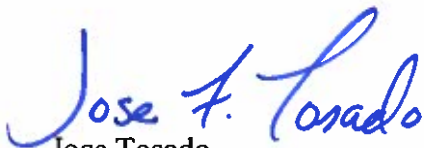
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Thomas Stanley  
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Steven Ultrino  
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Susannah Whipps  
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Harold Naughton  
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Paul Tucker  
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Daniel Donahue  
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Denise Garlick  
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Chynah Tyler  
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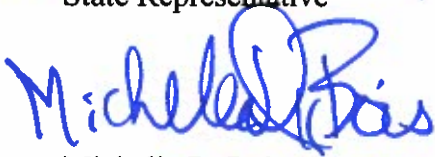
Colleen Garry  
State Representative



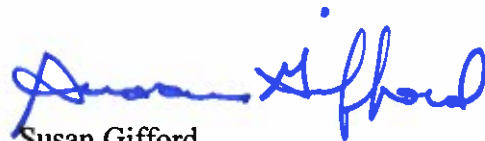
Shawn Dooley  
State Representative



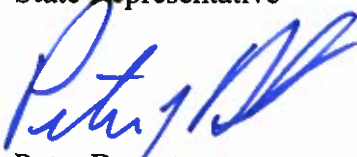
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State Representative



Michelle DuBois  
State Representative



Susan Gifford  
State Representative



Peter Durant  
State Representative



Solomon Goldstein-Rose  
State Representative



Lori Ehrlich  
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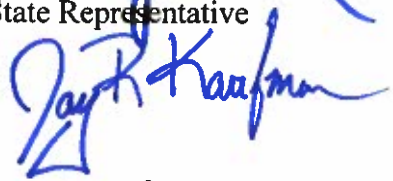
Mary Keefe  
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Juana Matias  
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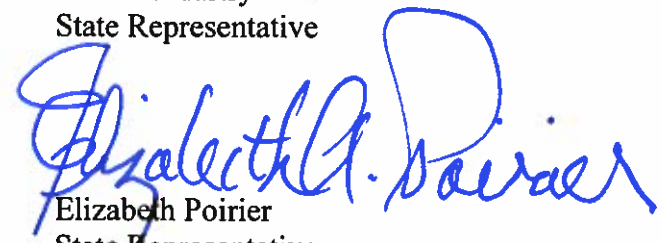
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Jay Kaufman  
State Representative



Paul McMurtry  
State Representative



Elizabeth Poirier  
State Representative



Nicholas Botygge  
3<sup>rd</sup> Hampden  
State Representative