

[View this email in your browser](#)



Dear Friend,

I am excited to announce that the Massachusetts Senate's FY24 budget is complete. I have many policy victories and budget highlights to share with you all.

Notably, the Senate budget provides **in-state tuition for any student who went to a Massachusetts high school for at least three years and graduated**, regardless of immigration status. This change would align the Commonwealth with 23 states and D.C that already offer in-state tuition to this demographic. Massachusetts supports our immigrant population and it's time we remove this unnecessary barrier to higher education.

I'm proud to share that this budget also allocates **\$4 million for Non-Profit Security Grants** to fund important security improvements to houses of worship and other institutions at increased risk of targeted violence, including \$300,000 for security personnel.

The budget also includes language from my bill to provide **free phone calls in prisons and jails in Massachusetts**. The current rates for prison phone calls are exorbitant and a significant financial burden for families of incarcerated people. Making prison phone calls free reduces recidivism, and passing these reforms into law is long overdue.

In the wake of the recent decision from a federal district court in Texas and the ensuing uncertainty surrounding access to medication abortion, I'm proud to share that the Senate adopted my amendment **to ensure that the University of Massachusetts is reimbursed for helping Massachusetts**

Massachusetts residents continue to have access to it. For my full remarks on this amendment, please visit [the following link](#).

I also successfully advocated for funds to be included in this budget to support the **Carroll Center for the Blind in Newton** and the **Massachusetts Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired in Brookline**.

**Other highlights include:**

- \$303.1 million for elder home care and case management, providing much needed health and services to keep seniors in their homes
- \$119.3 million for children's mental health services
- \$22.7 million for the Department of Public Utilities to maintain proper pipeline and utility safety
- \$20 million for the [Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund](#) to help pair unemployed and under-employed individuals with higher paying jobs
- \$12.5 million to expand low-threshold housing to support formerly homeless individuals impacted by substance abuse across the Commonwealth
- \$10 million for programs that make Massachusetts more resilient against the impacts of climate change
- \$35 million for Emergency Food Assistance to help the many Massachusetts households experiencing food insecurity

**K-12 Education/Chapter 70 Funding:** Through this budget, the Senate fully funded the third year of the Student Opportunity Act, which remains on track to be fully implemented by FY27.

The budget further designates:

- \$503.8 million for the Special Education Circuit Breaker, to reimburse school districts for the cost of educating students with disabilities

- \$6 million for Social Emotional Learning Grants to help K-12 schools improve social emotional learning supports for students
- \$1 million to continue a pilot program providing mental health screenings for K-12 students

In addition, the budget allocates \$6.59 billion in Chapter 70 education funding, a \$603.6 million increase from last fiscal year. That figure includes the following allocations for school districts within the Norfolk and Middlesex District:

## CHAPTER 70 EDUCATION FUNDING

**NEWTON**      **\$27,433,806**

**BROOKLINE**      **\$16,035,247**

**WELLESLEY**      **\$9,916,764**

SENATOR  
CINDY CREEM  
First Middlesex & Norfolk

## UNRESTRICTED GENERAL GOVT AID / LOCAL AID

**NEWTON**      **\$7,025,359**

**BROOKLINE**      **\$7,589,864**

**WELLESLEY**      **\$1,548,657**

SENATOR  
CINDY CREEM  
First Middlesex & Norfolk

The Senate's final FY24 budget includes many important amendments that strengthen its provisions. And, in addition to dedicating **over \$1.06 billion to housing stability, residential assistance, and homelessness assistance programs**, the Senate included many housing protections for renters, including an amendment that would **stay an eviction proceeding while an application for rental assistance (RAFT) is pending** and allow eligible tenants the opportunity to petition to seal their eviction record in such cases.

I am pleased to report that several amendments I filed were successfully incorporated into the budget, including support for programming to **help emerging adults return to the community after incarceration** and much-needed funding to hire direct care staff at the **Massachusetts Commission for the Blind**.

Several local amendments I filed were also adopted, including the following investments in our communities:

- **Newton**
  - **Cheesecake Brook Improvements** - Funds to support the restoration of the Cheesecake Brook in Newton
  - **Farlow Park** - Funds to support much needed improvements to Farlow Park in Newton, including the Chaffin House property and Farlow Pond
  - **DCR Property at 107 Charles Street** - Language requiring DCR, prior to taking action to eliminate this structure, to hold a public hearing on the future use of the building, including assessing if there are alternative local sites to accommodate organizations currently using the space
- **Brookline**
  - **Brookline Senior Center Microtransit** - Funds for the development of a strategic plan for the Brookline Senior Center, including a microtransit project to increase mobility options for local seniors

feasibility study for the development of an outdoor community swimming facility in Brookline, as requested by Town Meeting

- **Wellesley**
  - **Wellesley Voting Equipment** - Funds for Wellesley to update the Town's voting equipment
  - **Wellesley AEDs** - Funds for the purchase of automated external defibrillators

For a complete list of budget amendments I filed, or co-sponsored, please visit [the following link](#).

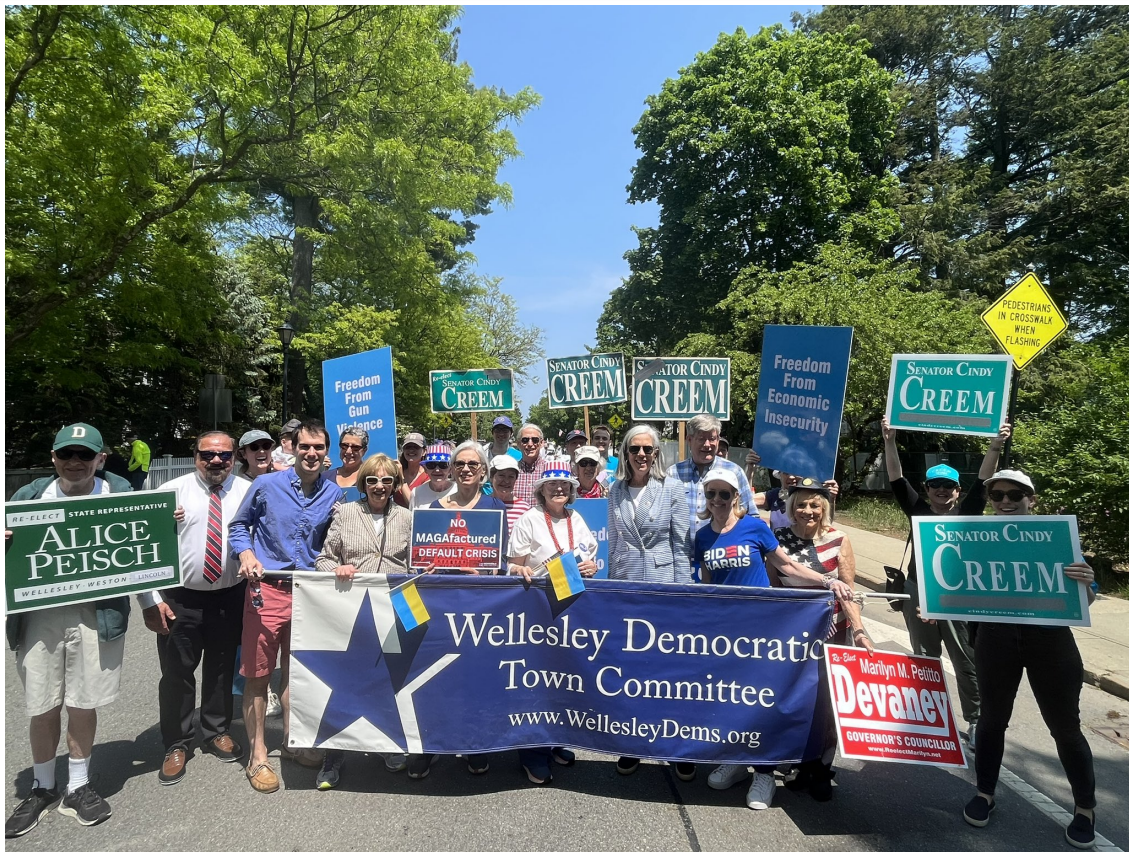
### More Amendments

In addition to the above local amendments, below are additional amendment highlights that were successfully incorporated in the final Senate budget, all of which I proudly supported:

- **Hate Crime Prevention:** Doubling the amount of funding for hate crime prevention in public schools
- **Maternal Health Fund** - Allocating additional funding to support freestanding birth centers and nonprofits that serve communities with the highest rates of maternal mortality and morbidity
- **988 Suicide and Crisis Hotline** - Bolstering the funding for the state's 5 call centers fielding 988 calls for mental health emergencies
- **Hunger-Free Campuses** - Increasing funding for programs to address food insecurity on college campuses
- **Civics Education** - Allocating additional funds to expand and support civics education in Massachusetts' public schools

The FY24 budget now heads to a conference committee tasked with resolving the differences between the House and Senate versions. All of these provisions will need to be negotiated, so we will keep our fingers crossed that these important appropriations are included in the final budget. Please stay tuned!

---



I had a great time marching with my team and constituents in the Wellesley Veterans' Parade this past weekend!



School Democrats of America visit the Senate chamber this week. The students were also part of an American Civil Liberties Union effort to increase youth civic engagement and participation in government.



During the budget debate, I requested the Senate adjourn in memory of Brookline resident Margot Stern Strom, who passed away in March.

Margot created the widely renowned Facing History curriculum to educate young people about the Holocaust and other difficult periods in history.

Joining me in the Senate Chamber for the adjournment was Adam Strom, Margot's son, Adam's wife, Sandy Smith-Garcés, and Fran Colletti, the current New England Executive Director for Facing History and Ourselves.

### **Press Alert!**

We need a real plan for addressing the emissions that come from burning gas for heat, cooking, and hot water. Together with House sponsors Rep. Owens and Rep. Armini, [I wrote about how my Future of Clean Heat Act charts a path toward emissions-free buildings in Massachusetts.](#)



### Additional Updates and Resources

**MBTA Service Updates** - In June, there will be diversions on the Red, Green, and Orange Lines to improve service and reliability that may impact your commute. More information is available at [the following link](#).

**DCR Recreational Advisory: The Charles River** - The DCR will be conducting invasive aquatic species control work on May 31, 2023 on the Charles River. More information, including recommendations for recreational activity that day, is [available here](#).

**Newton Porchfest** - On June 3rd, Newton is hosting Porchfest! More information is available at the [following link](#).

**Linden Park Community Day** - The Town of Brookline is hosting a community day at Linden Park on Saturday, June 3rd. Please see the following link for [more information](#).

**Need a COVID Test?** - Find a COVID testing location [near you](#).

**Looking for a Local Vaccine or Booster?** - Locate a [vaccine distribution center](#) in your area.

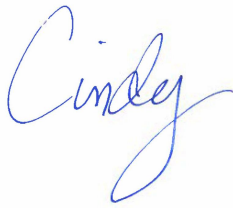
My office can be reached by phone during office hours (617-722-1639). We



at [Cynthia.Creem@MASenate.gov](mailto:Cynthia.Creem@MASenate.gov).

Please visit my [website](#) for additional information and resources. You can also stay informed with real-time updates by following me on [Twitter](#). And, if you know someone who would like to receive this newsletter, please invite them to [subscribe](#).

Take care,



---

*Copyright © 2021 Senator Cynthia Stone Creem, All rights reserved.*

**Our mailing address is:**

Senator Cynthia Stone Creem  
State House Rm 312A  
Boston, MA 02133-1000

[Add us to your address book](#)

Want to change how you receive these emails?  
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#).

[Subscribe](#)

[Past Issues](#)

[Translate ▼](#)

[RSS](#)