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**DeNUCCI SAYS LOCAL SPECIAL ELECTION COSTS  
MUST BE FUNDED BY STATE**

State Auditor Joe DeNucci today determined that the upcoming special election for U.S. Senate is an unfunded state mandate on cities and towns, and therefore the local costs must be fully funded by the state.

The state's Local Mandate Law, passed in 1980 as part of Proposition 2½, requires that state laws imposing new costs on local governments must either be fully funded by the state, or subject to voluntary local acceptance. Under the law, DeNucci's Division of Local Mandates is responsible for determining the local financial impact of state mandates.

DeNucci made his determination after local officials questioned whether they should be forced to absorb the cost of the Dec. 8 primary and Jan. 19 special election to choose a successor to the late Senator Edward M. Kennedy. DeNucci said this imposes a new cost on cities and towns, because prior to passage of the 2004 law requiring a special election, the governor appointed an individual to serve the remainder of a vacated U.S. Senate term.

DeNucci's Division of Local Mandates estimated that the special election will cost cities and towns \$7.2 million just to cover the cost of wages for election day workers and law enforcement personnel. DeNucci said the actual cost will be higher after taking into account other additional costs such as certifying nomination papers, setting up and breaking down polling places, printing voting lists, programming voting equipment, and rental and interpreter expenses.

DeNucci suggested an initial upfront distribution of \$7.2 million to cities and towns, but said he intends to work with Secretary of State Galvin and the Massachusetts Town Clerks' Association to seek creation of a reserve account to cover all costs to the communities.

"The state law requiring this special election imposes a significant cost on cities and towns at a time when they can least afford it," said DeNucci. "I request that my legal determination lead to full state funding of these costs."