

THE AUDITOR'S REPORT



News & Updates

from the Office of the State Auditor Suzanne M. Bump

Making government work better



Suzanne M. Bump
State Auditor



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Dear Friend,

As we head toward the end of the year, we reflect on all that occurred in 2017. Undoubtedly, this was a year that strained public trust in government. Fake news and “alternative facts” left many of us confused about what our national government was doing, and how it would impact our lives.

In my office, we’ve chosen a different path. Instead of cynicism and division, we sought accountability and opportunity in state government. Instead of undermining trust in government, we sought to lead the nation by our example.

Rather than undermining programs that are intended to serve our state’s most vulnerable residents, we sought to make them work better. We released the first two audits in our initiative to [strengthen our state’s social safety net](#). Through these audits, we provided guidance on how our state can reduce barriers to access to programs that [serve critically ill children and their families](#), and [support veterans in our state](#).

While at the federal level we saw attempts to undercut faith in our elections by promoting a bogus theory of voter fraud, my office sought to strengthen our state’s early voting law. After [finding the state did not provide local governments with adequate resources](#) to provide this service, [we worked with lawmakers to begin the process of establishing a permanent process for funding this important service](#).

We know that our work to bolster public trust in government is not over. In 2018, we will certainly see new efforts from some in Washington, D.C. to undermine the institutions that are designed to serve us. But as we begin a new year, my commitment to making government work for the residents of the Commonwealth is stronger than ever.

Happy holidays!

Thank you,

Suzanne M. Bump
Auditor of the Commonwealth

Recent Audits/Reports

[Soldiers' Home in Holyoke](#)

[Lynnfield Housing Authority](#)

[Department of Children and Families \(DCF\)](#)

[Salem State University](#)

[Independent State Auditor's determination on North Shore Community College's Proposal to Privatize Its Campus Bookstore](#)

[View more audits](#)

Recent Press Releases

[Auditor Bump Provides Recommendations for Improvements at the Soldiers' Home in Holyoke](#)

[Statement from Auditor Bump on Letter from Governor Baker](#)

[Bump Calls on DCF to Take Proactive Approach to Protecting Children](#)

[Auditor Bump Asks Municipal Clerks to Report Early Voting Spending](#)

[Auditor Bump Hosts Panel on Promoting Innovation in Government](#)

[Auditor Bump Visits Carter & Stevens Farm to Discuss State Agricultural Programs](#)

[Auditor Bump Tours Quabbin Reservoir to Discuss Water Infrastructure](#)

[Medford Woman Indicted for Social Security, Medicare, MassHealth, and Food Stamp Fraud](#)

[Auditor Bump Visits Jefferson to Discuss Needed Improvements to Regional School District Structure](#)

[View more releases](#)



Auditor Bump briefed media outlets about the Department of Children and Families (DCF) audit at the State House.

OSA Focus: Keeping Kids Safe

There are few responsibilities as important in state government as keeping kids safe. Since taking office, Auditor Suzanne M. Bump has worked to strengthen the state's child welfare system.

Earlier this month, Auditor Bump released the most recent audit of the [Massachusetts Department of Children and Families \(DCF\)](#). This important organization plays a critical role in protecting vulnerable children who have been (or are at risk of being) abused or neglected. The audit points to several important steps the agency can take to better protect children in its care.

First, after finding 260 instances of potentially serious bodily injury to children in DCF care that the agency did not know about, Bump called on the agency to use MassHealth data to proactively track medical instances involving children in the agency's care. This is a powerful step the agency can take to supplement the current mandated reporting, and to modernize its systems, providing an additional layer of security for kids in DCF care.

Secondly, Bump has called for the agency to strengthen its reporting to the Office of the Child Advocate (OCA). OCA, as the name suggests, is responsible for advocating for the safety, security, and well-being of children in state care, and it provides critical oversight to DCF. In the audit, Bump encouraged the agency to improve its reporting of critical incidents to OCA, and also called on it to classify sexual abuse as a critical incident.

The work of DCF is incredibly difficult and incredibly important. Through this audit, Bump is providing important recommendations that put the health, safety, and security of children in state care at the forefront.



Auditor Bump recently hosted a panel discussion at the **Massachusetts GOVERNING Leadership Forum**. The panel was focused on creating a culture of innovation in government. Bump was joined by Bill Oates, former chief Information Officer for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and Jorge Pazos, Director of IT for the Town of Wayland. Through the use of sophisticated data analytics tools, Bump has made her office a leader in innovative approaches to government accountability. Learn more about one of our data analytics tools [here](#).

OSA's Work Makes Headlines

[DCF audit is still relevant today and just as disturbing \(Editorial\)](#)

Following the release of the OSA's audit of the Department of Children and Families (DCF), the Springfield Republican calls the report reason to put the implementation of reforms at the agency in the forefront.

[Audit of Department of Children and Families Finds Need for Improvements](#)

The Boston Globe highlights the audit of DCF which recommends the child welfare agency take a more proactive approach to its efforts to keep kids safe.

[Beacon Hill needs to draw clear lines on sexual harassment](#)

In the wake of high profile sexual harassment and assault cases, Auditor Bump has recommended the creation of a code of conduct for the Legislature so standards of behavior are clear. The Boston Globe editorialized on the issue and agreed with Auditor Bump's recommendation.

[Audit cites lack of oversight at Salem State](#)

The recommendations from our audit of Salem State University will be used to improve oversight at the campus, officials told the Salem News.

[Danvers responds to state survey on early voting expenses](#)

The Office of the State Auditor Suzanne Bump's Division of Local Mandates is collecting data from cities and towns about unfunded costs related to early voting in 2016. The Danvers Herald reports on the local impact of this work.

Accountability in Action: Early Voting

There is no more powerful single action that a citizen can take than casting their ballot. It is how they express not only their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the current direction of government, but it is also a concrete statement of what kind of city, state, and nation in which they want to live. We owe it to them to make sure the process works.

Earlier this year, [the Office of State Auditor Suzanne M. Bump \(OSA\) found that while Massachusetts' early voting law was a success for voters in 2016, parts of this law placed an unfunded mandate on municipalities.](#)

The OSA analysis found that state government did not provide funding to local election officials to fulfill the early voting law's requirements related to staffing, privacy, and polling locations.



In response to this determination, the Legislature tasked Bump's office with providing an official certification of the unfunded, mandated early voting costs incurred by local governments in 2016. This is an important step toward strengthening the early voting law in Massachusetts and ensuring cities and towns have the resources they need to successfully provide voters with early access to the ballot. [The OSA sent a survey to municipalities last month, and will provide the certification to the legislature early in the new year.](#) This certification will help legislators allocate funds to reimburse municipalities for 2016 costs.

The ability of citizens to cast their ballot is essential to building public trust in government. Through its work, the OSA is ensuring that local governments that administer elections have the resources they need to provide every voter with the opportunity to make their voice heard.



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