

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



Dear Friend,

Bay Staters were shocked last month when they read the headline, "Yikes! Data breach at Mass. tax agency allowed companies to peek in on competitors' data." They couldn't believe their eyes when a week later another headline proclaimed, "Data breach was twice as large as Department of Revenue said." And the next week, when they saw yet another headline that read, "Revenue Dept. failed to deliver timely child support payments," they knew something needed to be done.

[These headlines](#) made clear that more accountability and oversight is needed at the Department of Revenue. [I have filed a bill](#) that would do just that by granting my office access to information contained in tax records for agency audit purposes.

Massachusetts is among only a handful of states that deny access to information on tax records to the State Auditor's Office, which means auditors do not have the access to be able to detect systemic deficiencies like those causing these problems. Access to this information will allow my office to provide recommended steps the agency can take to prevent future problems.

Residents and businesses of the Commonwealth deserve to know that the agency that collects their tax dollars is taking all appropriate steps to protect those dollars and their confidential information. This bill will take an important step toward providing that accountability.

Thank you,

Suzanne M. Bump
Auditor of the Commonwealth

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Recent Audits/Reports

[Committee for Public Counsel Services \(CPCS\)](#)

[Massachusetts Life Science Center](#)

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[Commonwealth Health Insurance Connector Authority](#)

[The Key Program Incorporated](#)

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Recent Press Releases

[Audit Finds Improvements to Determination Process to Provide State-Sponsored Legal Representation](#)

[In Wake of Data Breach, Auditor Bump Calls for Enhanced Oversight Capabilities of the Department of Revenue](#)

[Auditor Bump Submits Letter Encouraging Legislators to Pass Measure Improving Oversight of the Department of Revenue](#)

[Massachusetts Communities to be Reimbursed for 2016 Mandated Early Voting Expenses](#)

[Bump on the Trump Administration Infrastructure Proposal: "Barely A Drop in the Bucket"](#)

[Auditor Bump Appoints Dr. Kimberly Truong of Woburn to Serve on the Self-Determination Advisory Board](#)

[Auditor Bump Highlights Office Accomplishments, Calls for Greater Inter-Agency Collaboration in Government](#)

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In her testimony before the Legislature last month, Auditor Bump highlighted audits demonstrating that greater collaboration across state government is needed. Read Auditor Bump's full testimony [here](#).

OSA Focus: Improving Performance

When most people hear the word "audit" they get an uneasy feeling in their stomach and their head is filled with thoughts of people scouring through financial documents searching for errors.

In the Office of State Auditor Suzanne M. Bump, we see audits differently - and we work to share our vision with our auditees and the public at large. Rather than just focusing on the dollars and cents of government spending, we look at the big picture of how a government agency or contractor is performing. We seek to understand:

- Is the auditee meeting its mission and responsibilities?
- Is it being an effective steward of taxpayer dollars?
- Can it better harness technology to serve the residents of the Commonwealth?

Instead of simply pointing out where a state government agency or contractor has gone wrong, we aim to help our auditees work better by providing recommendations to improve their performance. Last year, auditees told us they implemented 92 percent of these recommendations.

Recently, our performance audits have led to meaningful improvements at several state entities. After our audit [recommended that the Sex Offender Registry Board use data-matching to find missing sex offenders](#), the Board reported that initial steps taken to implement this recommendation helped them find hundreds of missing offenders. [A 2016 audit of the Chelsea Soldiers' Home found unsafe and unsanitary living conditions at the facility](#). In response to this audit, administration at the Soldiers' Home took swift steps to address some of the most pressing issues and thanks to years of advocacy by veterans and their families, months after the report was released the state approved a \$199 million investment to replace the long-term care facility at the Home. And as you'll read later in this newsletter, [a 2011 audit of the Committee for Public Counsel Services led to Office of the Commissioner of Probation establishing a process to verify the need of clients seeking state-sponsored legal representation](#).

It is our hope that through our work, we can demonstrate that audits are tools that can make government work better.



Last month, Auditor Bump sat down with State Representative Steve Ultrino (right) to discuss how her office helps state government work better and serves as a resource for municipalities during a taping of his cable access show, "Your Voice on Beacon Hill." The [episode](#) airs this month on Malden Access Television.

OSA's Work Makes Headlines

[Auditor: No easy fix for regional schools](#)

Transportation costs take up a huge portion of school budgets—particularly for regional school districts that rely heavily on state reimbursements to fund these expenses. The *Newburyport Daily News* focuses on the impacts of this funding on the Triton Regional School District budget and highlights recommendations from the Division of Local Mandates that encourage the state to fully fund these reimbursements and modernize the financing and structure of regional school districts.

[Massachusetts Municipalities Being Reimbursed For 2016 Early Voting Costs](#)

Following a mandate determination from the Division of Local Mandates, the state approved a \$1.06 million appropriation to fund reimbursements for expenses incurred by cities and towns to provide early voting in 2016, *WAMC* reports.

[Column: A perfect storm for state's water infrastructure](#)

After the record-setting tides in January brought damage and destruction to many communities across Massachusetts, Auditor Bump wrote an op-ed which appeared in the *Gloucester Times* highlighting how these extreme weather events show the need for greater federal, state, and local collaboration to meet with significant water infrastructure needs of the Commonwealth.

[Audit Finds Improvements to Determination Process to Provide State-Sponsored Legal Representation](#)

The *Somerville News Journal* highlights the audit of the Committee for Public Counsel Services which found improvements to the process for determining whether an individual seeking state-sponsored legal representation meets the requirements and recommended steps CPCS can take to improve its bill review and vendor payment processes.

Accountability in Action: You Have a Right to An Attorney

"You have the right to an attorney. If you cannot afford an attorney, one will be provided for you."

Those words, which are part of the "Miranda Warning," are the words every individual hears when they are arrested for a crime. These words ensure that individuals facing criminal prosecution are not charged and convicted simply because they cannot afford an attorney with the knowledge to defend them in a court of law. The right to an attorney was enshrined in the 6th Amendment of our U.S. Constitution, and reinforced by the Gideon v. Wainwright decision by the U.S. Supreme Court.

In Massachusetts, state-sponsored attorneys are provided to individuals by the Committee for Public Counsel Services (CPCS). A 2011 audit of CPCS by

State Auditor Suzanne M. Bump found that the process in place to determine whether an individual seeking a state-sponsored attorney qualified for the services was ineffective - [\\$47.9 million in public counsel services were provided statewide without verifying if the recipient was actually indigent](#).

Last month, [Auditor Bump released an new audit of CPCS](#) which found significant improvements as a result of her office's work. The audit showed that the Commonwealth now has a process to verify and document whether a person qualifies for state-sponsored legal representation.

The changes made in response to the work of the OSA to verify a client's qualifications ensure that the Commonwealth keeps its commitment to provide a criminal justice system in which all people facing criminal charges or prosecution have access to effective legal counsel.



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