

# 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,

Whenever I speak in public, I talk about how public trust is the foundation of our democracy. I explain that all functions of government—whether it is educating our children, tackling the opioid epidemic, or providing healthcare to residents—require citizens to trust that those tasks can be effectively and efficiently completed.

The rhetoric of this year's election has no doubt taken a toll on the public's trust in government. But, with the votes cast, and the victors focused on their oath of office and service to their constituents, we have an opportunity to re-cast government's image.

This fresh start provides elected leaders with the chance to prioritize accountability. It allows us to do more than simply place blame for problems that exist, and instead take proactive actions to ensure we get the most out of our tax dollars and public assets by protecting them against waste, fraud, and abuse.

It's my hope, that with the ballots counted, and the attack ads taken down, that elected leaders at all levels of government, and from all political affiliations, will put aside the rancor and divisiveness of the election, and focus on our shared goal of rebuilding public trust in government. Together, we can all make government work better in Massachusetts.

Thank you,

Suzanne M. Bump  
*Auditor of the Commonwealth*

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## Recent Audits

[Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women](#)

[North Shore Community College](#)

[Board of Registration of Hearing Instrument Specialists](#)

[Soldiers' Home in Massachusetts—Chelsea](#)

[Aduitus Inc.](#)

[Massachusetts Parole Board](#)

[Municipal Police Training Commission](#)

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## Recent Press Releases

[Bump Recommends Inventory Improvements at North Shore community College](#)

[Bump Calls for Action at Chelsea Soldiers' Home](#)

[East Longmeadow Non-profit Inappropriately Charged State for Expenses](#)

[Parole Board Not Properly Administering Collection of Supervision Fees](#)

[Police Officers Moving to Massachusetts Did Not Receive Orientation Training on State Laws within the Required Timeframe](#)

[View more releases](#)

## Upcoming Events

**Auditor Bump Speaks at the Hampshire Council of Governments Western Mass Legislative Summit**, Saturday, Dec. 3 at 10 a.m., at JFK Middle School, Northampton.



*Auditor Bump recently met with business owners in Mansfield to discuss the work of her office and hear their concerns about the performance of state government.*

## OSA Focus: Learning From the Experts

While the job of auditors is inherently one focused on independence and objectivity, it is equally important that auditors understand the context of the questions and challenges their audit work seeks to answer. That is where research comes in.

Research is not just reading policy papers and analyses of statutes and law. It also involves visiting sites across the Commonwealth to see how these policies are working and whether residents are getting the services they expect and deserve. To this effort, Auditor Bump regularly meets with residents of the state to hear first-hand their concerns and ideas.

Recently, she led a roundtable discussion focused on child welfare with daycare service providers in the greater Worcester area to follow-up on the OSA's 2014 audit on the [Department of Children and Families](#) and learn about how the agency has implemented new changes to inform our current, ongoing audit at DCF. The goal was to hear about the impact of reforms at DCF and to make OSA staff aware of problems facing providers and vendors that work with the state. Auditors can use this anecdotal information to help narrow how they use data to identify trends.

The Worcester session was just the latest effort to get first-hand knowledge. In the last year, Auditor Bump has met with business owners and local policy makers in Mansfield to discuss OSA's work around MassHealth and talked with law enforcement officials in Western Massachusetts about the capabilities provided by the office's data analytics tools to help law enforcement's efforts to identify solutions to the state's opioid epidemic.

These roundtables and conversations help inform the work of the office, making it a driving force of accountability and transparency in state government. The aim of the Auditor's Office is to make government work better. Doing so means learning not just what went wrong, but striving to learn the root causes that lead to those problems. Conversations with experts in the field are critical to achieve that goal and build public trust in government.

**Want Auditor Bump to join you for a roundtable?** If you or your organization would like to hold a roundtable discussion with Auditor Bump, [use our online form](#) to send us the details about your idea.

# OSA's Work Makes Headlines

## [Deplorable living conditions found at Chelsea veterans' home](#)

5 Investigates takes a closer look at poor health and safety conditions at the Chelsea Soldiers' Home as identified during an audit.

## [State Auditor's tool 'harnessing 21st-century business analytics'](#)

During a visit to Clark University's Mosakowski Institute for Public Enterprise, Auditor Bump discussed how data analytics tools help the OSA produce more impactful audits, as Worcester Magazine reports.



*Auditor Bump (right) discussed the Massachusetts Parole Board audit with Boston Herald Radio hosts Jacklyn Cashman (left) and Hillary Chabot (center) during her monthly appearance on Morning Meeting. Listen to the full interview [here](#).*

## [Mass Auditor: Parole Board Needs To Improve In Collecting Fees, Evaluating Parolees](#)

Auditor Bump discussed the recent Massachusetts Parole Board audit with New England Public Radio. The audit found the board did not properly administer and collect parole supervision fees, and did not perform supervision-level reassessments in required timeframes.

## [New police coming in from out of state didn't go through required training](#)

An audit of the Municipal Police Training Commission found that the commission was not ensuring that police officers moving to Massachusetts were getting training on Massachusetts laws within the required 90-day timeframe, as WWLP-22 News reports.

[Read more coverage of OSA's work](#)

**Questions or concerns about this newsletter?**

Email us at  
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# Accountability in Action: Providing Equity Under the Law

Government represents each of us. It represents our collective voices and efforts to address challenges, and it should treat each person equally.

To ensure constituents are treated fairly, government agencies must have policies that guide their decision making process. While most state agencies have policies in place, all too often our audits show that agencies do not follow them, and instead make decisions using an individual's judgements, without standards for which they can be held accountable. From health care to education, we have found this practice repeatedly; it is perhaps most egregious when it is found in the realm of criminal justice.

Our criminal justice system is based on the notion that justice is blind, ensuring that regardless of who you are, your background, or where you live, you'll be treated equitably in the eyes of the law. However, recent audits found that when it comes to the administration of the Commonwealth's [probation](#) and [parole](#) fees, justice does not always meet this standard.

These audits found that, while there are clear processes for collecting probation and parole fees, and procedures for waiving or adjusting them, individuals charged with overseeing the administration of these fees disregarded them.

While it is easy to dismiss government protocols as red tape, in most cases the protocols are designed to protect the constituents government serves and ensure accountability. They ensure that a person on parole in Worcester who struggles to pay their required fees receives the same consideration as a person in the same situation in Boston.

Sometimes though, the protocols don't work as intended. Parole officers told auditors that often they did not collect required fees because they thought the fees created unfair obstacles to individuals recently released on parole, and would likely result in re-incarceration. Their concerns may be valid, but that does not negate their responsibility to assess fees or officially waive them—not to merely allow them to go uncollected.

As a result of these audits, the entities who administer probation and parole fees have indicated they have taken steps to ensure that these fees are assessed equitably, and are considering regulatory changes if necessary as well. In addition, since the probation audit was released in January, the Senate has convened a committee to look at court fees and other reforms; the OSA hopes that members will use our work to inform their decisions as they consider reforms to the system.

These two audits illustrate not only how all agencies are being held accountable, but also how audits can be used as a tool to help improve operations to ensure all individuals are treated fairly by the government that serves them.



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The Auditor's Report

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