July 8, 2016

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives,

I am filing for your consideration a bill entitled “An Act Making Appropriations for the Fiscal Year 2017 to Provide for Supplementing Certain Existing Appropriations and for Certain Other Activities and Projects.”

This bill consists of $279 million supplemental appropriations, at a net state cost of $177 million, for identified deficiencies in the FY17 budget I am signing today:

* $112.7 million for MassHealth, including caseload, Hepatitis C, and other exposures, offset by $101.6 million in MassHealth revenue, mostly connected to Hepatitis C drugs;
* $42 million for representation of indigent defendants;
* $30 million for a reserve for snow and ice costs at the Department of Transportation;
* $29 million in emergency assistance and shelter-diversion costs;
* $28 million for a reserve for sheriffs deficiencies;
* $15 million for payments to direct care workers mandated by chapter 257;
* $8 million for legal settlements and judgments;
* $5.1 million for caseload exposures at the Department of Transitional Assistance;
* $5 million for the treatment and prevention of opiate misuse;
* $4 million for costs related to alleged misconduct at former state drug laboratories;
* $280,000 for the human resources division, consisting of $780,000 of training costs offset by $500,000 in administrative savings; and
* $65,000 for municipal OPEB audits PERAC will conduct.

In addition, this bill proposes to freeze rates paid to private counsel for the representation of indigent defendants at FY16 levels, and makes other spending related technical changes.

In light of the actions I am taking today with respect to the fiscal 2017 General Appropriations Act, sufficient revenues are estimated to be available to finance these appropriations. Because these appropriations address urgent matters, I urge you to enact this legislation promptly.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles D. Baker

Governor