

# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

## AUDITOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133

SUZANNE M. BUMP, ESQ.  
AUDITOR

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May 21, 2021

The Honorable William Francis Galvin  
Secretary of the Commonwealth  
State House, Room 337  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Secretary Galvin:

Per the legislative authorization contained in Chapter 227 of the Acts of 2020, I am forwarding to you the final certification for costs related to the early voting mandate for the 2020 state primary and general election. The attached document shows the certified amount for each community which has resulted in a grand total of \$ 2,702,365.86 (this is less than the legislative appropriation of \$3,016,019 contained in line item 0521-0002).


This project required close cooperation among the clerks, elections officials, and financial staff of the 351 communities surveyed. We worked through issues related to this process with the Secretary of State's Elections Division, the Executive Office of Administration and Finance and the Treasurer and staff of Plymouth County. I deeply appreciate everyone's cooperation in what proved to be a challenging task.

The total represents the net costs in the categories of personnel, postage and other items deemed related to the mandate for in-person and vote-by-mail early voting for the 2020 primary and general election season. Complicating the task were the diverse and substantial reimbursements available to communities through the CARES Act, grants from the Center of Tech and Civic Life and your partial reimbursement for postage expenses. All told, cities and towns received more than \$3.5 million in reimbursements from other sources, which as a result, have significantly offset the total costs being certified today. In fact, over 100 communities submitted claims of \$0 as a result of the substantial reimbursements they had already received.

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Given the unprecedented nature of elections during 2020 because of COVID-19, it is difficult to project what these costs will be in the future. However, even with the typically lower turnout in mid-term elections, the costs to municipalities of the mandated expenses will be substantial. Compounding the uncertainty, is the unknown availability of federal reimbursements for these future elections. Given this, we would like to work with your office and local election officials on a funding formula for election cost reimbursements that would be known in advance, simplify the process and provide some guidance to cities and towns as to what costs will be reimbursed and at what levels.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S M Bump', written in a cursive style.

Suzanne M. Bump  
Auditor of the Commonwealth

cc: Charles D. Baker, Governor of the Commonwealth  
Deborah Goldberg, Treasurer of the Commonwealth  
Ronald Mariano, Speaker of the House of Representatives  
Karen E. Spilka, Senate President  
Aaron Michlewitz, Chair of House Committee on Ways & Means  
Michael J. Rodrigues, Chair of Senate Committee on Ways & Means  
Daniel J. Ryan, House Chair, Joint Committee on Election Laws  
Barry R. Finegold, Senate Chair, Joint Committee on Election Laws  
Steven T. James, Clerk, House of Representatives  
Michael D. Hurley, Clerk, Senate  
William McNamara, Comptroller of the Commonwealth  
Michael Heffernan, Secretary, Executive Office for Administration and Finance