

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,

June is LGBT Pride Month. It is an opportunity to celebrate the diversity that makes us stronger and the progress we have made.

Massachusetts has always been a leader on LGBT equality. As a lawmaker, I had the great privilege of supporting legislation that made our state the second in the nation to provide explicit protections from discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations based on sexual orientation. In 2016, our state built on this progress by extending the same protections to transgender people as well.

As state auditor, my commitment to these issues has continued. Shortly after taking office, I worked with lawmakers to strengthen our state's anti-bullying laws to include specific protections for frequent targets of bullying, such as LGBT youth. I've also made it clear that my office is one where all people are valued.

While this month we should celebrate the progress we have made, we should also recognize that progress hard-earned can be easily lost. This is why we should take this time to recommit ourselves to ensuring full equality for all people.

Happy Pride!

Suzanne M. Bump
Auditor of the Commonwealth



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In February, Auditor Bump testified before the legislature in support of her agency's budget and other funding issues. Lawmakers from the House and Senate are currently working to finalize a state budget. In addition to setting funding levels, they also have the opportunity to implement policies related to early voting, regional schools, and municipal finances that will make government work better.

OSA Focus: Crunch-time for the Budget

It is crunch-time in the State House as lawmakers hammer out the differences between the House and Senate versions of the budget for the 2019 fiscal year before sending it to the governor for his consideration. In addition to determining funding levels for state government agencies, lawmakers also will decide how to approach several important policy decisions.

Work from the OSA has helped to [highlight the challenges facing regional school districts](#) in the state. Both the House and Senate have taken heed of this and included increases to the funding for these schools—particularly in the realm of transportation costs, however, the branches have recommended different funding levels so the jury is still out on the final number. The House also included increased funding for homeless student transportation costs. The OSA will continue to work with lawmakers to urge them to meet their commitment to these schools.

Earlier this year, [lawmakers voted to reimburse cities and towns](#) for their mandated costs of providing early voting in 2016; however, they did not develop a permanent process for funding this service in future elections. An amendment included in the Senate budget (but not the House) would establish such a process. Putting into law a process to allocate this funding will strengthen early voting and provide local governments with the assurances that their expenses will be covered.

The Senate also took heed of our [audit of the Sex Offender Registry Board](#) and made recommendations to improve its processes.

Finally, we continue to work with lawmakers to require that state government agencies file a municipal impact statement with our office when adopting, amending, or repealing regulations. This will allow our office to proactively provide guidance on ways to reduce adverse impacts of regulations on cities and towns. This measure was included in the Senate budget and the OSA will encourage the legislature to include it in the final budget as well.

A state budget is more than dollars and cents. It also includes critical policy choices that will have ramifications for years to come. These are several areas where the Legislature has the opportunity to make government work better.

OSA's Work Makes Headlines

Lawmakers look at closing loopholes that left sex offenders off the radar

The Legislature is taking steps to strengthen efforts to locate and classify convicted sex offenders. An audit released by the OSA in 2017 found 1,769 sex offenders in violation of reporting requirements and nearly 1,000 that were never classified, WCVB reports.

State audit of Wellesley Housing Authority: Some improvements, but things could be better

A recent audit of the Wellesley Housing Authority found the agency is already taking steps to improve issues identified, including conducting an inventory of appliances, improving the unit inspection process, and training staff on waiting list management, the *Wellesley Townsman* reports.



Auditor Bump recently attended the Spring Conference of the Massachusetts Association of Contributory Retirement Systems, where she commended public servants for their work for the residents of the Commonwealth. In addition, she talked about her recent day stepping into the shoes of local firefighters.

Quincy firefighting event turns up heat on politicians

The *Patriot Ledger* highlights an event hosted by the Professional Fire Fighters of Massachusetts offering a behind-the-scenes look at the many ways they train to keep communities safe. While there, Auditor Bump got to experience some of the challenges fire fighters face every day.

Accountability in Action: Combatting Cybersecurity Threats

New data breaches and cybercrimes are making headlines daily. While stories like Facebook and Equifax get the most attention, this month brought a reminder that government entities are also targets of cyberscammers.

An audit released by the Office of the State Auditor this month found that the [Massachusetts Clean Energy Center](#) (MassCEC) unwittingly wired \$93,679 in public funds to an account controlled by a cyberscammer. Compounding this problem, MassCEC did not notify its full board of directors in a timely fashion and never formally notified law enforcement. As a result, only 27 percent of the stolen funds were recovered.



Fortunately, MassCEC has taken this audit to heart and has quickly taken action to address the deficiencies that made the organization vulnerable to this type of cyberattack. It has identified where it is at risk, developed policies and processes to reduce these risks, and developed a formal policy to ensure its leadership is immediately notified of such an incident.

As more and more government business is done online, these threats will continue to become more prevalent. It is our hope that the incident involving MassCEC will spur other agencies to review their process for preventing and responding to these threats.



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