



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

AUDITOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133

SUZANNE M. BUMP, ESQ.
AUDITOR

TEL: 617-727-2075

January 8, 2018

Dear Colleagues:

Pursuant to Chapter 110 of the Acts of 2017, the FY17 Final Supplemental Budget, the Division of Local Mandates within the Office of the State Auditor has certified expenses for the 351 cities and towns of the Commonwealth from the early voting period of 2016. The legislative action followed to the mandate determination issued by my office in February 2017 which found portions of the early voting law imposed unfunded mandates on our municipalities. I have certified that municipalities spent a total of \$1,063,978.14 for the mandated early voting costs related to the general election held in the fall of 2016. I ask that you fund this amount in an upcoming supplemental budget.

In order to compile and certify this total, my office sent an electronic survey to the 351 city and town clerks asking specific questions about the expenditures they incurred to meet the requirements of the law. As you may recall, the law called on municipalities to offer early voting during normal business hours during a 12 day period in October 2016. Our mandate determination found additional expenses, such as overtime for regular employees or the cost of additional election workers to support early voting, to be an unfunded mandate, thus requiring reimbursement from the Commonwealth. These carefully examined expenses are within the total cited above.

In preparation for the 2016 general election, the legislature appropriated \$400,000 to the Secretary of the Commonwealth to support early voting. The Secretary used most of that total to support additional hours for voting beyond what was required by the law over the weekend of October 29 and 30, 2016. Those optional expenditures are not included in the totals. Moreover, the Secretary provided grants to offset costs of equipment used to support early voting. Those expenses that the Secretary reimbursed through grants are also not counted in our total. This process accounts for the expenses for 2016. We want to work with you to set out the process for 2018 and the general elections in the future. We have made suggestions to the proper committees as to legislative language we recommend.

If you have questions on this document or the detailed numbers attached, please contact the Director of the Division of Local Mandates, Ben Tafoya, at 857-242-5428.

I look forward to our continuing cooperation on this issue. Early voting is an important addition to our democratic processes and funding the expenses incurred by our municipalities will make it that much stronger.

Sincerely,



Suzanne M. Bump
Auditor of the Commonwealth

cc: Charles D. Baker, Governor of the Commonwealth
William Galvin, Secretary of Commonwealth
Deborah Goldberg, Treasurer of the Commonwealth
Robert A. DeLeo, Speaker of the House
Harriette L. Chandler, Acting Senate President
Jeffrey Sánchez, Chair of House Committee on Ways and Means
Karen E. Spilka, Chair of Senate Committee on Ways and Means
John J. Mahoney, House Chair of Joint Committee on Election Laws
Anne M. Gobi, Senate Chair of Joint Committee on Election Laws
Steven T. James, House of Representatives Clerk
William F. Welch, Senate Clerk
Thomas Shack, Comptroller
Michael Heffernan, Secretary of the Executive Office of Administration and Finance