

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS **LEGISLATURE 101**

Southern New England Advocacy Conference (SNEAC)
February 26th, 2023

Gabriel Adams-Keane
Legislative Director

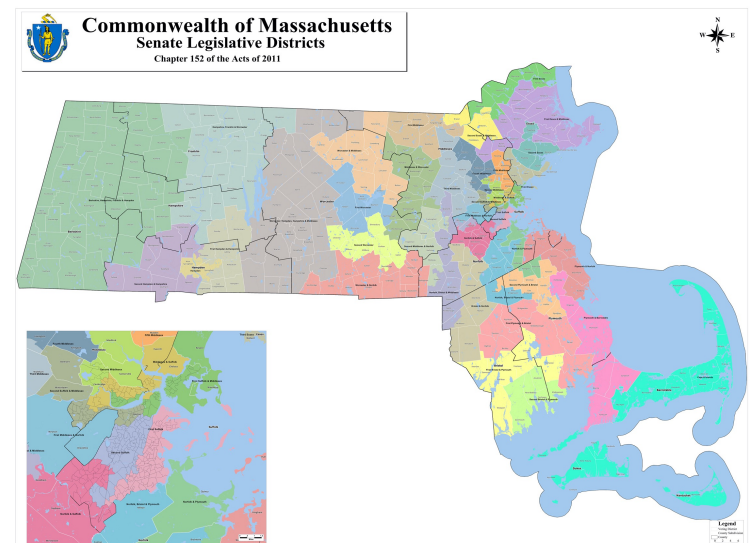
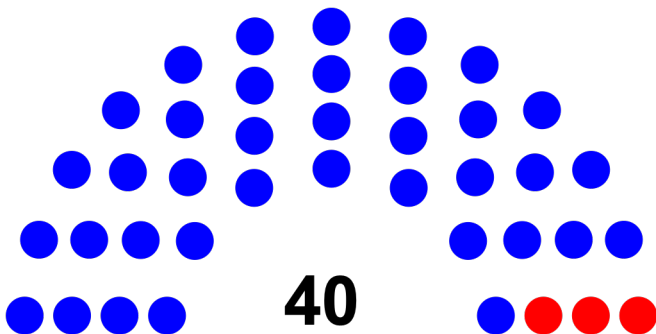
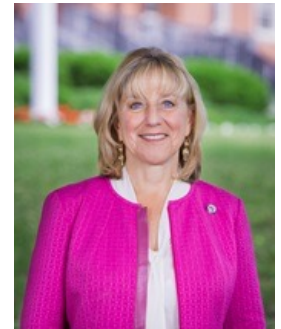
Office of State Senator John C. Velis
Hampden and Hampshire District

Vocabulary

- **Amendment** - Any alteration made (or proposed to be made) to a bill
- **Bill** - a draft of a proposed law presented to the legislature
- **Committee** - A body of members appointed to consider and make recommendations concerning disposition of bills, resolutions and other related matters
- **Conference Committee** - A committee composed of members from the two houses specifically appointed to reconcile the differences between House and Senate versions of a bill or bills
- **General Court** - state legislature of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
- **Law** - an individual rule as part of a system of law
- **Legislator** - a member of the legislative body
- **Legislature** - deliberative assembly with the authority to make laws for a political entity such as a country or city
- **Majority Party** - The political party having the greatest number of members in the legislature or in either chamber
- **Minority Party** - The political party having fewer numbers of members in the legislature or in either chamber
- **Testimony** - spoken or written statements that something is true
- **Veto** - Action by the governor to disapprove a measure

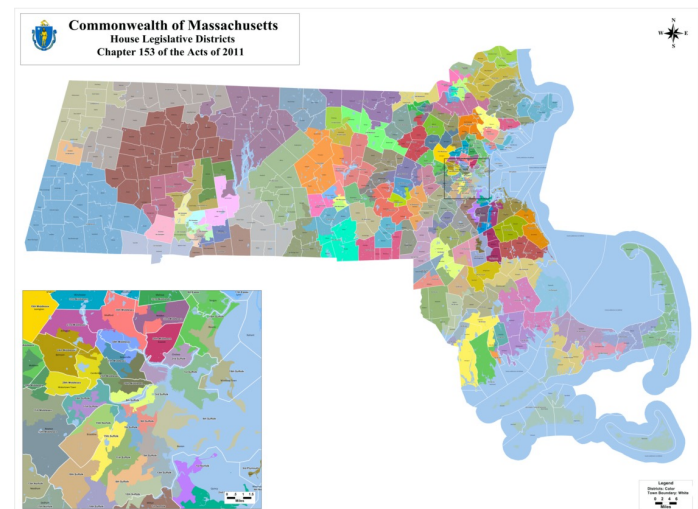
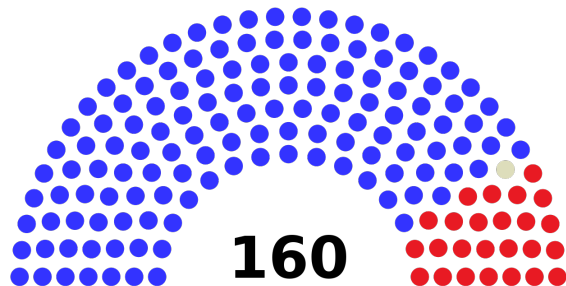
Composition of the General Court

- Senate
 - Senate President
 - Sen. Karen Spilka (D-Ashland, 2nd Middlesex and Norfolk District)
 - 40 Members
 - Represent about 159,000 constituents each
 - 37 Democrats, 3 Republicans
 - Elected for 2 year terms



Composition of the General Court

- House of Representatives
 - Speaker of the House
 - Rep. Ronald Mariano (D-Quincy, 3rd Norfolk District)
- 160 Members
 - Represent about 40,000 constituents each
 - 134 Democrats, 25 Republicans, 1 Unenrolled
 - Elected for 2 year terms



Leadership & Committee Structure

- Leadership of each branch assigns chairs and members to specific Committees charged with closely looking at Legislation
 - Sen. Velis, for example, is Chair of 2 committees:
 - Senate Chair of Mental Health, Substance Use, And Recovery
 - Senate Chair of Veterans and Federal Affairs
 - Senate Vice-Chair of Elder Affairs
 - Sen. Velis also sits on 4 committees: Housing, the Judiciary, Public Safety & Homeland Security, and State Administration and Regulatory Oversight

Role of Committee

- Public Hearings
 - Every bill in Massachusetts is required to have a public hearing
 - Chance for committee to hear input and debate from public
- Committees and Chairs are able to move bills along, eventually to the Floor for debate and passage, or to hold them in Committee

Step 1: There ought to be a law!

- Bills (and ultimately laws) can originate from:
 - Proposals sponsored by legislators or the Governor
 - Recommendations of a department or agency
 - Recommendations of a think tank or other non-governmental organization
 - Members of the public



Step 2: Writing the bill

- House and Senate Counsel
- How to write a bill - 70 page manual!
- Figure out precisely what you want to do

MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL COURT
 LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH AND DRAFTING MANUAL
 Fifth Edition
 2010

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ITEM (1)	ACTION (2)	LEADING REFERENCE	OF THE ...	IS HEREBY ...*	DESCRIPTION
CHAPTER	ADD	NOT USED.			
CHAPTER	INSERT	The General Laws		are hereby amended by	inserting after cha; ** the following chapter:—
CHAPTER	REPEAL	Chapter **	of the ****	is hereby repealed.	
CHAPTER	REPLACE	NOT USED.			
SECTION	ADD	Chapter **	of the ****	is hereby amended by	adding the followin section:—
SECTION	INSERT	Chapter **	of the ****	is hereby amended by	inserting after sect ** the following section:—
SECTION	REPEAL	Section ** of chapter **	of the ****	is hereby repealed.	
SECTION	REPLACE	Chapter **	of the ****	is hereby amended by	striking out section as appearing in the XXXX Official Editi and inserting in pla thereof the followin section:—
PARAGRAPH	ADD	Section ** of chapter **	of the ****	is hereby amended by	adding the followin paragraph:—
PARAGRAPH	DELETE	Section ** of chapter **	of the ****	is hereby amended by	striking out the ** paragraph:—
PARAGRAPH	INSERT	Section ** of chapter **	of the ****	is hereby amended by	inserting after the ' paragraph of the following paragraph:—
PARAGRAPH	REPLACE	Section ** of chapter **	of the ****	is hereby amended by	striking out the ** paragraph and in inserting in place thereof the followin paragraph:—
SENTENCE	ADD	Section ** of chapter **	of the ****	is hereby amended by	adding the followin sentence:—
SENTENCE	DELETE	Section ** of chapter **	of the ****	is hereby amended by	striking out the ** sentence.
SENTENCE	DELETE	The ** paragraph of section ** of chapter **	of the ****	is hereby amended by	striking out the ** sentence. inserting after the ' sentence the following sentence
SENTENCE	INSERT	Section ** of chapter **	of the ****	is hereby amended by	inserting after the ' sentence the following sentence
SENTENCE	REPLACE	Section ** of chapter **	of the ****	is hereby amended by	striking out the ** sentence and inserting in place

What does a bill look like?

SENATE DOCKET, NO. 1182 FILED ON: 1/19/2023

SENATE No.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

John C. Velis

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act establishing an elementary and secondary school robotics grant program.

PETITION OF:

NAME:

John C. Velis

Danillo A. Sena

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

Hampden and Hampshire

37th Middlesex

SENATE No.

[Pin Slip]

[SIMILAR MATTER FILED IN PREVIOUS SESSION
SEE [Refile Branch], NO. OF 2021-2022.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court
(2023-2024)**

An Act establishing an elementary and secondary school robotics grant program.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 Chapter 15 of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the following section:-

2 Section 67. (a) The department of education, hereinafter referred to as the department,
3 shall establish a grant program, subject to appropriation, to be known as the elementary and
4 secondary robotics grant program for the purpose of providing grants to assist school districts,
5 Horace Mann and commonwealth charter schools with the development of STEM and robotics
6 programs in schools. The grants shall be used to help students succeed academically and attend
7 colleges with a major in science, technology, engineering and math. The grants shall help
8 prepare students for a workforce in STEM and robotics. The grants shall also encourage
9 voluntary expansion of existing STEM and robotics programs in the commonwealth. The
10 department shall develop guidelines governing the grant program and guidelines for
11 implementation of said program.

12 (b) Applicants shall be commonwealth school districts, Horace Mann and commonwealth
13 charter schools. Schools without a sponsored robotics club or established robotics program shall
14 be given preference for grant awards. Priority shall be given to schools located in the following
15 counties: Berkshire, Hampden, Hampshire, Franklin, Bristol, Barnstable and Dukes. Applicants
16 shall commit to running a team registered with one of the following organizations: FIRST
17 Robotics Competition, FIRST Tech Challenge, FIRST Lego League Explore, FIRST Lego
18 League Challenge, VEX Robotics Competition, VEX IQ Challenge or Science Olympiad, or
19 approved by the commissioner.

20 (c) The commissioner shall evaluate annually programs established under this section
21 including the potential for replicating such programs throughout the commonwealth. The
22 commissioner shall also provide technical assistance to school districts seeking to replicate
23 programs funded under said section.

Step 3: Bill is filed

- Whether proposed by a legislator, offered by the Governor or filed by a legislator at the request of a member of the public, a petition for legislation is filed in the House or Senate, accompanied by a bill that is assigned a number and referred to a committee.
- Often, a Senator and a Representative will file the same bill in each of their chambers

Document Drafting - It's a Bill

Filing Information

Petition

Bill

Summary

Shared Access

FILING INFORMATION

Filing Type

Is there an Emergency Preamble? No Yes

Is this document by request? No Yes

Is Local Approval Required? No Yes

PETITION

Presenter Sena, Danilo

Step 4: Cosponsorship

- Getting other legislators to sign on to show support

SENATE DOCKET, NO. 2295 FILED ON: 1/20/2023

SENATE No.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

John C. Velis

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

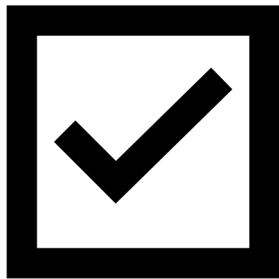
An Act relative to the humane protection of animals.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>John C. Velis</i>	<i>Hampden and Hampshire</i>	
<i>Patrick M. O'Connor</i>	<i>First Plymouth and Norfolk</i>	<i>2/2/2023</i>
<i>Jack Patrick Lewis</i>	<i>7th Middlesex</i>	<i>1/26/2023</i>
<i>Steven George Xiarhos</i>	<i>5th Barnstable</i>	<i>2/6/2023</i>
<i>Angelo J. Puppolo, Jr.</i>	<i>12th Hampden</i>	<i>2/6/2023</i>
<i>Michelle M. DuBois</i>	<i>10th Plymouth</i>	<i>2/8/2023</i>

Step 5: Hearing and testimony

- The bill is sent to a committee, which holds a public hearing
- The committee hears testimony regarding the bill from the public, government officials and office holders.
- After the hearing is held, the committee issues a report recommending whether the petition “ought to pass” (reported favorably), “ought not to pass” (reported adversely), be subject to further study or discharged to another committee.
- Committee can also redraft bill and report it out



Step 6: Committee Report - Rejection or on to First Reading

- A bill reported favorably appears in the Journal of the House or Senate and is given its first reading, usually followed by referral to another committee for further review.
- A measure reported adversely will not proceed further unless the unfavorable report is overturned by a vote of either branch.

JOURNAL OF THE HOUSE.

Monday, March 1, 2021.

Met according to adjournment at eleven o'clock A.M., in an Informal Session, with Mr. Garballey of Arlington in the Chair (having been appointed by the Speaker, under authority conferred by Rule 5, to perform the duties of the Chair).

At the request of the Chair (Mr. Garballey), the members and employees joined with him in reciting the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Pledge of allegiance.

Petitions.

Petitions (deposited with the Clerk previously to five o'clock in the afternoon on Friday, February 19, 2021) were presented and they were severally referred, under Rule 24 and Joint Rule 13, as follows:

By Ms. Domb of Amherst, a petition (accompanied by proposal, House, No. 74) of Mindy Domb, Chynah Tyler and others for a legislative amendment to the Constitution relative to voting rights;

Voting rights.

By Mr. Mark of Peru, a petition (accompanied by proposal, House, No. 75) of Paul W. Mark and Lindsay N. Sabadosa for a legislative amendment to the Constitution relative to no fault absentee voting; and

Absentee voting.

By Mr. Moran of Boston, a petition (accompanied by proposal, House, No. 76) of Michael J. Moran and Kevin G. Honan for a legislative amendment to the Constitution to provide for no excuse absentee voting;

Id.

Severally to the committee on Election Laws.

Step 7: Bill Read a Second Time, Debate Begins

Upon the second reading of a bill on the floor, it is subject to debate, motions and amendments.



Step 8: Bill Proceeds to the Committee on Bills in the Third Reading

- The Committee on Bills in the Third Reading examines the bill for legality, constitutionality and the duplication or contradiction of existing law.
- After a thorough review, the bill is released and heads back to the House or Senate floor for a third reading.

Step 9: Bill Read a Third Time, Floor Debate Continues

- Upon the third reading of the bill, it is again subject to debate, motions and amendments in the House or Senate
- Once debate concludes, a vote is taken on whether to pass the bill to be engrossed (passed)



Step 10: Bill Passed to be Engrossed by One Legislative Branch

Upon a favorable vote by the House or Senate, the bill advances to the other legislative branch.



Step 11: Second Legislative Branch Considers the Bill

If the bill advances through three readings and is engrossed in the second legislative branch, it will be sent to the Legislative Engrossing Division to be typed on special parchment as required by law.



Step 11.5: Amendments Produce Conflicting Versions

- If the bill is amended by the second branch, it will have to be returned to the first branch for a concurrence vote.
- If concurrence is rejected, a bi-partisan conference committee of three members from each branch is appointed to craft a compromise bill that will be sent to both legislative branches for a final vote.
- The conference committee's report recommending the compromise bill is not subject to amendment, so the legislators need to vote 'yes' or 'no' on it.



Step 12: Bill Enacted and Sent to the Governor

- A vote to enact by both legislative branches results in passage of the bill, with the newly-created Act sent to the governor.
- The governor has the authority to:
 - Sign the bill into law
 - Veto the legislation
 - Or send the bill back to the Legislature with recommended amendments.
- A veto by the governor can be overridden with a two-thirds vote in both legislative branches.



Step 13: Original Idea Becomes Law!

- The act, which began its journey through the legislative process as an idea, becomes law in Massachusetts if it is signed by the governor, or if a veto by the governor is overridden.
- The new law usually takes effect in 90 days but can become effective immediately if it includes an emergency preamble.
- A bill can also become effective later than 90 days if specified in the bill text.



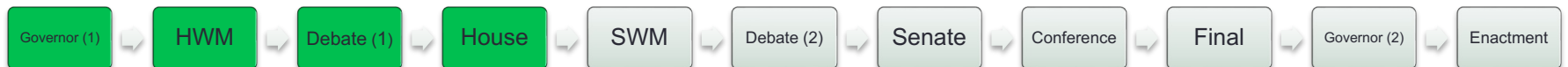
Hooray, your bill is passed and is now law!
Now, let's take a brief **recess**.

Budget Process

- July 1st is the beginning and end of the Fiscal Year.
- Any appropriations or budget bills have to begin in the House of Representatives
 - So called “Money” or “Tax” Bills
- Commonwealth must have a Budget based on State Revenue
- Developed through House and Senate Ways and Means Committees
 - House Chair Aaron Michlewitz (D-Boston, 3rd Suffolk District)
 - Senate Chair Michael Rodrigues (D-Westport, 1st Bristol and Plymouth District)

The Budget: Governor & House

- **Early January:** Governor's budget released, providing recommendations from the executive for next year.
- **Late February and Early March:** Ways and Means chairs meet with legislators to discuss their budget priorities
- **2nd Week of April:** House Ways and Means (HWM) Budget Released
 - Prior to its release, HWM holds public hearings across the state
 - Input from Gov's budget as well as from Administration on expected Tax Revenue for upcoming fiscal year
- **Last Week of April:** House debate, providing an opportunity for House members to file amendments and debate
- Following debate and a vote, the House budget is passed and sent on to the Senate



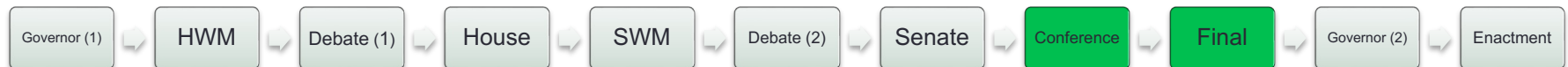
The Budget: Senate

- **2nd Week of May:** Senate Ways and Means (SWM) budget released
 - Formulated separately from House and Gov's budget
 - Developed after public SWM hearings
- **3rd Week of May:** Senate debate, including amendment filing
- Senators vote on a budget following debate



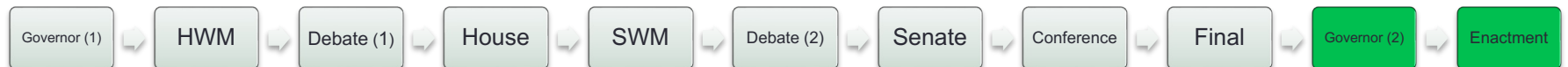
The Budget: Conference Committee

- Conference Committee Formed
 - Committee is appointed of 4 members from each body to reconcile differences in bill
 - Committee normally consists of leadership, Ways and Means members and members of the minority party
- Final Budget
 - After conference committee finishes budget compromise is approved by both bodies and sent to the Governor's desk



The Budget - Governor & Enactment

- Governor Actions
 - Governor has 7 days to approve budget or to provide vetoes and return budget to the legislature
 - Line Item Vetoes
- Veto Override
 - If Governor sends back vetoes, the legislature has ability to override these vetoes with a 2/3 majority vote
- Budget Enacted
 - Revenue changes? Additional supplemental budgets can be filed



What does a legislator actually do?

- Session
- Committee
- Advocacy Organization Meetings
- Briefings & Advocacy Events
- Local Events
- Caucuses
- Constituent Meetings
- Constituent Services

Constituent Services

- Unemployment (DUA/PUA)
- RMV
- Evictions
- Immigration
- Letters Of Support
- Local and state organization referrals (ex. Household Goods, RCAP, Veterans Inc.)
- Connection with federal and local officials

Effective Advocacy

- Attend Public Hearings
- Get involved with like-minded groups to bring attention to an issue (Google 'issue + town/region/state')
- Reach out to your legislators in the House and Senate
 - Letters
 - Emails
 - Phone Calls
- Meetings with legislators

Questions?

Contact Information



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