



**Policy and Legislative Priorities
January 2019**

Access to Healthy Affordable Food

SD1501/HD791: Close the SNAP Gap and Create a Common Application

This bill will create a common application portal to let low income households apply for MassHealth and SNAP at the same time. This lays the foundation for a common application portal for safety-net benefits, reducing duplicate data collection, and increasing efficiency of state government. Fact sheet :

<https://mapublichealth.org/priorities/access-to-healthy-affordable-food/snap/>

SD1106/HD1083 : Codify the Healthy Incentives Program (HIP) into Law

Since April 2017, HIP has meant better health outcomes for vulnerable families, and better sustainability for local farms. Launched in April 2017, the Healthy Incentives Program provides monthly incentives to SNAP households to purchase fresh, local, healthy vegetables and fruits from Massachusetts farmers at farmers markets, farmstands, CSAs, and mobile markets. This is a tremendous economic driver for farmers in Western MA. It also addresses the food insecurity in our region—where 1 in 8 people are food insecure. In some Springfield neighborhoods, 20% (1 in 5) residents are food insecure. Fact sheet:

<https://tinyurl.com/HIPMA2019>

Transportation Equity

Increased Funding and Support for Modernization of Regional Transit Authorities (RTAs)*

Public transportation is an issue of employment, health equity, family, education, racial justice, economic development, disability rights, environmental health, and basic dignity.

HD.808/SD.1008 – An Act relative to regional transportation ballot initiatives

This bill would enable a municipality, or a group of municipalities as a district, to raise local money through a ballot initiative for investment in priority transportation projects, operations or transit-oriented development.

Public & Community Health

SD916/ HD2182: Reauthorize the Prevention & Wellness Trust Fund

Although people's health is influenced primarily by the conditions where they live, work, and play, our \$60 billion health care system is designed to treat people after they're sick. PWTF is essential to change this and invest in prevention. From 2014- 2018, PWTF funded successful clinical-community partnerships focused on childhood asthma, falls among older adults, hypertension, and tobacco use – work which an independent evaluator found to be impactful on health outcomes and costs. We participated in **Healthy Holyoke** and saw the positive impacts on people with asthma and hypertension.

Fact sheet: <https://tinyurl.com/PWTF2019>

HD. 2904/SD 1966: MassHealth Provider Reimbursement to Schools.

These bills to direct that Medicaid funds billed for school health services be required to go to the school district level for school health services, vs the general municipal/city budget.

SD922/HD2682: Create the State Action for Public Health Excellence (SAPHE) Program

The SAPHE program is important because everyone deserves equal protection from public health hazards. Due to an inefficient system, where you live largely determines the level of services you receive and many municipalities lack access to the resources needed to fully provide statutorily required services. We need a local public health system that is equitable and efficient. This bill is aligned with the recommendations of the *Special Commission on Local and Regional Public Health*, a 25-member commission created by the legislature in 2016. The Special Commission includes representation from the legislature, Administration and Finance, health care, MA Taxpayers Association, MA Municipal Association, academia, agriculture, and local public health. Fact sheet: <https://tinyurl.com/SAPHE2019>

Housing & Economic Development

SD2085/HD2563: Prevent Childhood Lead Poisoning

Childhood lead poisoning can cause irreversible neurological damage; it disproportionately impacts low income kids and kids of color and cities with older housing stock. Springfield has the highest risk in the state for childhood lead poisoning. Current funding is insufficient to meet statutory requirements to prevent and respond to cases of childhood lead poisoning – including providing family case management, housing inspections, and code enforcement to eliminate lead hazards. This bill will modestly increase licensing fees (in most cases by \$10-25) and increases tax credits for lead abatement and increases penalties for housing discrimination.

HD 2395: Prevent Homelessness through Rent Arrearage Program

The best way to prevent eviction, and the homelessness that can occur after an eviction, is to prevent that eviction from ever taking place at all. This bill will restore the statewide rent arrearage assistance program, and provide low income people who are behind on rent or mortgage payments with a cash assistance resource to help them stay in their homes, and avoid becoming homeless.

HD3507/SD1578: An Act Relative to Neighborhood Stabilization and Economic Development.

Filed by the Gateway Cities Legislative Caucus, this bill will provide communities with more powerful tools to address blighted and abandoned property and stabilize distressed neighborhoods across the Commonwealth. In addition, the bill doubles the market-rate Housing Development Incentive Program (HDIP) from \$10 to \$20 million annually.

Climate Change/Reducing Carbon Emissions

HD2370: Promote Green Infrastructure and Reduce Carbon Emissions/SD 1817: Combat Climate Change.

These bills will set up carbon pricing to address the crisis of climate change and resulting health impacts from the extreme weather, rising temperatures, and air quality impacts. Recent studies show we have only 12 years in which to avoid irreversible climate change. The Global Warming Solutions Act of 2008 requires us to reduce emissions 25% below 1990 levels by 2020 and 80% by 2050. We are not on target to meet these mandates with current policies. Carbon pollution pricing is the most effective way to drive down emissions.

HD 3092/SD 1625 - Re-powering Massachusetts with 100 percent renewable energy

The 100% Renewable Energy Act will power Massachusetts with 100 percent renewable electricity by 2035 and transition heating and transportation to 100 percent renewable energy by 2045.

Environmental Health

HD3339/SD1366/HD291/SD755/HD1500: Address the Harmful Impacts of Pesticides

HD.3339-An Act to Protect Massachusetts Pollinators. This bill will only allow those trained to use neonicotinoid pesticides.

SD.1366 - An Act protecting pollinators by eliminating harmful products. This bill will follow the recent action of the European Union and Canada by banning all uses of neonicotinoid pesticides.

HD.291- An Act empowering towns and cities to protect residents and the environment from harmful pesticides. This bill will restore municipalities' ability to regulate pesticides at the local level so that they can tailor laws for their communities regarding pesticides.

SD.755-An Act relative to the use of glyphosate on public lands. This bill will end the application of any glyphosate-based herbicide on any on any public lands owned or maintained by the Commonwealth without a special permit. It will also outlaw the use of "any pesticide in a manner inconsistent with its label."

HD.1500- An Act Relative to Improving Pesticide Protections for Massachusetts School Children. This bill will update the outdated list of pesticide products eligible for use on the outdoor grounds of schools, child care centers and school age child care programs within the state of Massachusetts. The proposed update will allow only pesticides considered minimum risk by EPA, or certified organic and will stop the outdoor use of toxic pesticides like glyphosate and 2,4-D.