

STATE HOUSE NEWS SERVICE

The Minority Leader's Daily Press Clips - April 19, 2016
Reps recommend 1,307 ways to improve House budget
By Michael Norton – State House News Service

From Rep. Kate Campanale's amendment 1 establishing a tax credit and personal income tax deduction for student loan assistance to Rep. Paul Mark's amendment 1,307 earmarking \$300,000 for the Opioid Task Force of Franklin County and the North Quabbin region, state representatives have submitted more than 1,300 amendments recommending changes to the \$39.48 billion fiscal 2017 budget recommended last week by the House Ways and Means Committee.

Committee chairman and staff will spend much of this school vacation week sorting through those amendments in anticipation of floor deliberations that launch on Monday, April 25, kicking off the annual "budget week" in the House. The Senate plans to tackle its budget in May and the branches will aim to have a budget to Gov. Charlie Baker's desk by July 1, the start of the new fiscal year.

Rep. Hannah Kane of Shrewsbury is sponsoring an amendment (970) calling on the University of Massachusetts at Amherst to study the existing levels of marijuana use in Massachusetts, the existing programs "that prevent and address the harmful consequences of marijuana use in schools and the community," and an analysis of issues around the effects of marijuana use on public safety and "the economic and fiscal issues around marijuana use." Rep. Peter Durant of Spencer wants in amendment 270 to ban the packaging of any medical marijuana product in a way that resembles commercial candy.

Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station, which is set to close in 2019, is the focus of two amendments. Rep. Thomas Calter of Kingston and other reps from the Plymouth area propose in amendment 770 the creation of a Nuclear Decommissioning Citizens Advisory Panel. And Reps. Sarah Peake of Provincetown and Josh Cutler of Duxbury recommend in amendment 577 the formation a special commission on Pilgrim's closure and decommissioning to assess and plan for closure impacts.

Earmarks are another popular amendment strategy. Rep. Angelo Puppolo is sponsoring an amendment (104) setting aside \$150,000 for New England Public Radio in Springfield. Rep Brad Hill of Ipswich wants in amendment 154 to earmark \$50,000 for a Great Marsh Green Crab Trapping Program. And Rep. Gailanne Cariddi of North Adams has an amendment (196) dedicating at least \$200,000 for grants for the Bay State Games.