



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

House of Representatives

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House Republican Caucus statement on FY23 closeout budget

BOSTON – *House Minority Leader Bradley H. Jones, Jr. (R-North Reading) released the following statement today on behalf of the Massachusetts House Republican Caucus regarding the pending FY23 final deficiency appropriations bill:*

“It has now been two weeks since Democratic leadership in the House and Senate failed to reach agreement on the FY23 final deficiency appropriations bill, making this the longest-delayed closeout budget since at least 1995. As a result, tens of thousands of state and county employees are still waiting for their long-overdue pay raises, cities and towns can’t access critical disaster relief funding, dozens of state programs are still in deficiency, and the Commonwealth as a whole is facing potentially serious financial repercussions for leadership’s failure to pass a bill closing the books on the previous fiscal year in a timely fashion.

On November 20, the House Republican Caucus attempted to break this impasse by submitting a letter to the conferees urging them to report a bill, in part, to fully fund the more than 90 collective bargaining agreements contained in both the House and Senate versions of the supplemental spending plan. Doing so would allow the state to fulfill its commitment to funding these contracts, while leaving the more contentious provisions of the budget such as emergency shelter funding for newly arrived migrants in conference to be subject to further negotiations. As of today, the caucus has not received any response from the conferees, and it appears that they have yet to meet as a group and have instead relied on private discussions between the House and Senate Ways and Means chairs to try to broker a deal.

The House Republican Caucus remains deeply concerned and strongly opposed to the migrant provisions put forth by House and Senate Democrats, which make up a significant portion of the closeout budget at \$250 million. The state’s emergency shelter system has been overwhelmed by the recent influx of thousands of individuals and families arriving in Massachusetts, while cities, towns and school districts continue to be burdened by the increased costs associated with housing and educating these migrants. Although Governor Healey has implemented a cap on the number of migrant families entering the emergency shelter system at 7,500 and moved others to a waitlist, there is currently no plan in place to stem the flow of new arrivals and no policy reforms implemented to ensure that longtime residents in need are not denied housing assistance, which is completely unacceptable.

If it is the intent of Democratic leadership to attempt to pass the \$2.8 billion closeout budget in its entirety in an informal session, minus any meaningful policy reforms, we want to make it clear that we strongly oppose this option. The fact that the Speaker, Senate President and Governor have been unable to reach consensus on the migrant issue shows that this is too contentious an issue to take up in an informal session. The House Republican Caucus believes this spending bill should receive a roll call vote in a full formal session, and not be passed in a sparsely attended informal session. The hard-working men and women who have been waiting months for their collectively bargained pay raises continue to show up for work, and the members of the House and Senate should be prepared to do the same and reconvene in a full formal session.”

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