March 27, 2020

Covid-19 Legislation

SB2599 - An Act authorizing waiver of the one week waiting period for unemployment benefits

Sponsor
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Summary
Instructs the director of unemployment assistance to waive the one-week waiting period for unemployment benefits claims by individuals separated from work due or related to the 2019 novel Coronavirus or "COVID-19" outbreak, or the effects of the Governor's March 10, 2020 declaration of a state of emergency. NOTE: Designated an emergency law, allowing for it to take immediate effect upon passage. (Reported by Senate Ways & Means in part of SB2598. The new text is identical to the original version filed by Governor Baker.)

Status
Signed by the Governor

Last Action
03/18/2020 G - Signed by the Governor

Actions
03/18/2020 S - Reported by committee in part of SB2598 View comparison to prior version 03/18/2020 S - Ordered to a third reading 03/18/2020 S - Passed to be engrossed 03/18/2020 H - Received in the House 03/18/2020 H - Ordered to a third reading 03/18/2020 H - Passed to be engrossed 03/18/2020 H - Emergency preamble adopted (7/0) 03/18/2020 S - Emergency preamble adopted (3/0) 03/18/2020 H - Enacted in the House 03/18/2020 S - Enacted in the Senate 03/18/2020 G - Laid before the Governor 03/18/2020 G - Signed by the Governor

SB2608 - An Act granting authority to postpone 2020 municipal elections in the commonwealth and increase voting options in response to the declaration of emergency to respond to COVID-19

Sponsor
Senate Committee on Ways & Means

Summary
Authorizes municipalities with an election scheduled to take place before May 30, 2020 to postpone the election to a date on or before June 30, 2020; allows elected officials whose term was set to expire to continue to serve until the new election; requires public notification of the election postponement; sets the voter registration deadline at 10 days before the new election date; allows previously submitted absentee ballots to be counted for the new election; expands absentee ballot eligibility to all those who are taking precautions related to COVID-19; expands early voting by mail for municipal elections held on or before June 30, 2020 to all eligible voters. NOTE: Designated an emergency law, allowing for it to take immediate effect upon passage.

Status
Signed by the Governor

Last Action
03/23/2020 G - Signed by the Governor

Actions
03/23/2020 S - Reported by committee in part - see HB4398
View comparison to prior version
03/23/2020 S - Ordered to a third reading
03/23/2020 S - Passed to be engrossed
03/23/2020 H - Received in the House
03/23/2020 H - Ordered to a third reading
03/23/2020 H - Passed to be engrossed
03/23/2020 H - Emergency preamble adopted (6/0)
03/23/2020 S - Emergency preamble adopted (3/0)
03/23/2020 H - Enacted in the House
03/23/2020 S - Enacted in the Senate
03/23/2020 G - Laid before the Governor
03/23/2020 G - Signed by the Governor

HB4580 - An Act addressing challenges in municipal governance resulting from COVID-19

Sponsor
Joint Committee on Municipalities & Regional Government

Summary
Grants municipalities greater flexibility to conduct business during the ongoing public health emergency; allows for town meetings to be postponed for 30 days, including past a statutory cut-off of June 30th; additionally allows the calling of a recess and continuation of a town meeting during any weather-related, public safety or public health emergency, and for up to 5 days after its termination; authorizes use of at least half of the monthly appropriation from the most recent budget for each month in which an emergency prevents adoption of a subsequent annual budget; additionally authorizes use of a municipality’s “free cash” during the COVID-19 state of emergency; authorizes and regulates amortization of deficit amounts incurred due to the COVID-19 state of emergency; suspends various municipal deadlines for between 45 and 90 days; prohibits imposition of any late fee or termination of services for nonpayment of fees and taxes resulting from an inability to pay. NOTE: Designated an emergency law, allowing for it to take immediate effect upon passage. New draft of HB4572. The new language repeals sections allowing for a smaller quorum, suspends various deadlines for municipal action and prohibits penalties for nonpayment of fees and taxes; implements sections related to town meetings effective March 10, 2020, and all other sections on passage.

Status
Ordered to a third reading in the House
HB4586 (HD4974) - An Act to further address challenges faced by municipalities, school districts and state authorities resulting from COVID-19

Sponsor
Governor

Summary
Submits Governor Baker’s additional recommendations to provide flexibility in addressing challenges related to the COVID-19 epidemic; specifically, the bill extends the deadline for completion of the MBTA budget, allows for electronic signatures on criminal warrants, modifies local permitting timelines and processes, allows continued employment of retired public employees, modifies collection of local taxes and fees, modifies and waives elementary and secondary education student competency and district performance requirements, authorizes suspension of local school budgeting processes, and allows sale of off-premises alcohol consumption by restaurants. To view additional details, click to see our section-by-section summary. NOTE: Designated an emergency law, allowing for it to take immediate effect upon passage.

Status
Ways & Means

Last Action
03/26/2020 H - Referred to House Committee on Ways and Means

Actions
03/24/2020 H - Filed in the House 03/26/2020 H - Referred to House Committee on Ways and Means

HD4927 - An Act relative to emergency hazard health duty

Sponsor
Rep. James Arciero (D)

Summary
Establishes a presumption that any public safety officials who contract, have symptoms of or who otherwise become affected with the Coronavirus (COVID-19) that results in hospitalization, quarantine, or self-quarantined measures, contracted their medical condition or incapacity to work in...
the line of duty; classifies the condition as work-related; defines public safety officials as including any individuals employed as police, fire personnel, correction officers, dispatchers, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, nursing professionals, and all individuals employed and considered as 1st responders; defines such time away from duty as on duty time; prohibits requiring use of sick time, vacation time, personal time or any other contractual time-off.

**Status**

Public Service

**Last Action**

03/26/2020 H - Referred to Joint Committee on Public Service

**Actions**

03/11/2020 H - Filed in the House 03/19/2020 H - Referred to House Committee on Rules 03/26/2020 H - Referred to Joint Committee on Public Service

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**SB2602 (SD2865) - An Act relative to emergency hazard health duty**

**Sponsor**

Sen. Michael O. Moore (D)

**Summary**

Establishes a presumption that any public safety officials who contract, have symptoms of or who otherwise become affected with the Coronavirus (COVID-19) that results in hospitalization, quarantine, or self-quarantined measures, contracted their medical condition or incapacity to work in the line of duty; classifies the condition as work-related; defines public safety officials as including any individuals employed as police, fire personnel, correction officers, dispatchers, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, nursing professionals, and all individuals employed and considered as 1st responders; defines such time away from duty as on duty time; prohibits requiring use of sick time, vacation time, personal time or any other contractual time-off. NOTE: Designated an emergency law, allowing for it to take immediate effect upon passage.

**Status**

Public Safety and Homeland Security

**Last Action**

03/18/2020 H - Concurred in committee referral

**Actions**

03/11/2020 S - Filed in the Senate 03/17/2020 S - Referred to Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security 03/18/2020 H - Concurred in committee referral

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**SD2870 - An Act providing certain state employees sick leave for COVID-19 related absences**
**Sponsor**
Sen. Paul Feeney (D)

**Summary**
Entitles any state employee who is absent from work due to COVID-19 infection, quarantine or isolation, and who does not have sufficient earned sick leave time for the absence, to paid leave for the duration of their COVID-19 related absence.

**Status**
Ways & Means

**Last Action**
03/26/2020 S - Referred to Senate Committee on Ways and Means

**Actions**
03/13/2020 S - Filed in the Senate 03/19/2020 S - Referred to Joint Committee on Rules 03/26/2020 S - Referred to Senate Committee on Ways and Means

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**SB2598 (SD2874) - An Act authorizing waiver of the one week waiting period for unemployment benefits**

**Sponsor**
Governor

**Summary**
Instructs the director of unemployment assistance to waive the one-week waiting period for unemployment benefits claims by individuals separated from work due to COVID-19 or the effects of the Governor’s March 10, 2020 declaration of a state of emergency. NOTE: Designated an emergency law, allowing for it to take immediate effect upon passage.

**Status**
Ways & Means

**Last Action**
03/18/2020 S - Reported by committee in part - see SB2599

**Actions**
03/16/2020 S - Filed in the Senate 03/16/2020 S - Referred to Senate Committee on Ways and Means 03/18/2020 S - Reported by committee in part - see SB2599
**HB4572 (HD4942) - An Act to address challenges in town governance resulting from COVID-19**

**Sponsor**
Governor

**Summary**
Grants municipalities greater flexibility to conduct business during the ongoing public health emergency; allows for town meetings to be postponed for 30 days, including past a statutory cut-off of June 30th; authorizes funding for essential operations of a town if it fails to approve a budget by June 30th due to the emergency; authorizes a lower town meeting quorum requirement during the emergency. NOTE: This legislation includes an emergency preamble, allowing it to take immediate effect upon passage.

**Status**
Reported favorably as amended by Joint Committee

**Last Action**
03/23/2020 H - New draft substituted - see HB4580View comparison to substituted version

**Actions**
03/16/2020 H - Filed in the House 03/16/2020 H - Referred to Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government 03/16/2020 S - Concurred in committee referral 03/17/2020 H - Hearing Scheduled 03/19/2020 12:01 PM - Public Hearing, 24 Beacon Street Room 540, Boston, MA 02130 03/23/2020 H - Reported favorably as amended by Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government 03/23/2020 H - New draft substituted - see HB4580View comparison to substituted version

**HD4971 - An Act to expand options for local restaurants during the COVID-19 emergency**

**Sponsor**
Rep. Kenneth I. Gordon (D)

**Summary**
Authorizes all holders of licenses for the sale of alcoholic beverages to be drunk on the premises (restaurants, bars, etc.) to begin selling alcohol via delivery or curbside pickup; places various restrictions on the delivery of alcoholic beverages in order to ensure that the alcoholic beverages cannot be readily accessed while driving or sold to someone under the age of 21; limits sales to 1.5 liters of wine, 72 ounces of malt beverages, and 10 ounces of spirits per customer per day; requires wines and spirits to be sold in their original sealed containers, and spirits to sold in a tamper proof container; caps the price at which alcoholic beverages can be sold in this manner, allowing existing inventory to be sold at the listed menu price, and requiring any inventory acquired after March 15th to be sold at cost; authorizes sales of alcoholic beverages between these licensees (e.g., one restaurant selling its inventory to another); provides for this act to take effect immediately, and expire along with
the expiration of either the COVID-19 state of emergency, or the prohibition of on-premises food or drink consumption, whichever comes first.

**Status**

Filed in the House

**Last Action**

03/23/2020 H - Filed in the House

**Actions**

03/23/2020 H - Filed in the House

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**SB2609 (SD2881) - Special elections**

**Sponsor**

Sen. Karen E. Spilka (D)

**Summary**

Changes the date for the special elections in the two vacant senate districts from March 31, 2020 to May 19, 2020. See previous orders, SB2434 and SB2436.

**Status**

Filed in the Senate

**Last Action**

03/23/2020 S - Order adopted

**Actions**

03/23/2020 S - Filed in the Senate 03/23/2020 S - Order adopted

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**SD2886 - An Act providing emergency assistance for municipal public safety overtime**

**Sponsor**

Sen. Michael O. Moore (D)

**Summary**

Directs the executive office of public safety and security to establish a grant program, assist cities and towns in addressing overtime costs of municipal police officers, municipal law enforcement personnel with arrest powers, municipal personnel with authority to enforce public health regulations, members of the fire department, and emergency medical technicians during the COVID-19 state of emergency.
SD2885 - An Act providing emergency assistance to gateway cities for temporary homeless shelters

Sponsor
Sen. Michael O. Moore (D)

Summary
Establishes a new GL 23B:31, directing the department of housing and community development to establish a grant program to fund the operation of temporary shelters for homeless individuals established in Gateway Cities during the COVID-19 state of emergency.

Status
Filed in the Senate

Last Action
03/24/2020 S - Filed in the Senate

Actions
03/24/2020 S - Filed in the Senate

SD2884 - An Act to expand take-out/delivery options for local restaurants in response to COVID-19

Sponsor
Sen. Diana DiZoglio (D)

Summary
Authorizes restaurants to sell wine, malt beverages, and spirits for off-premises consumption for the duration of the COVID-19 state of emergency; requires the sale of alcohol to accompany a food delivery or takeout order; requires the alcoholic beverages to be in their original sealed containers; requires deliveries to be made by the licensee or a TIPS-certified employee, and requires various precautions to prevent the sale of alcohol to minors. NOTE: Designated an emergency law, allowing for it to take immediate effect upon passage.
SD2882 - An Act relative to remote notarization during COVID-19 state of emergency

Sponsor
Sen. Bruce E. Tarr (R)

Summary
Authorizes attorney and paralegal notaries to perform an acknowledgement, affirmation, or other notarial act using real time video conferencing for the duration of the COVID-19 state of emergency; sets out the procedures and various restrictions for remote notarization, including steps to ensure proper identification of parties involved and their presence in Massachusetts.

Status
Filed in the Senate

Last Action
03/24/2020 S - Filed in the Senate

Actions
03/24/2020 S - Filed in the Senate

SD2888 - An Act concerning business interruption insurance

Sponsor
Sen. James B. Eldridge (D)

Summary
Requires all insurance policies insuring against loss or damage to property, the loss of use and occupancy and business interruption in force in the commonwealth, to cover any losses resulting from business interruption directly or indirectly due to the global pandemic known as COVID-19; prohibits denial of a claim due to the fact that COVID-19 is a virus and/or there is no physical property damage; requires coverage to continue until executive order 591 is rescinded by the Governor. Authorizes and regulates reimbursement of insurers for such business loss payments to insureds; directs the commissioner of insurance to impose and collect assessments against licensed insurers that provide...
business interruption coverage, for the purpose of funding insurance reimbursement during the COVID-19 public health emergency. NOTE: Designated an emergency law, allowing for it to take immediate effect upon passage.

Status
Filed in the Senate

Last Action
03/24/2020 S - Filed in the Senate

Actions
03/24/2020 S - Filed in the Senate

HD4978 - An Act providing for cash assistance to certain persons over 65 years of age who stopped working as a result of COVID-19 or stay-at-home advisory (The CARE Act)

Sponsor
Rep. Nika Elugardo (D)

Summary
Establishes the CARE Fund to support those over the age of 65 who are unable to work during the ongoing COVID-19 emergency; directs the comptroller to transfer $15 million to the fund; allows applicants to receive benefits from this fund if they meet the following requirements: stopped working due to COVID-19, are 65 or older, are ineligible for unemployment benefits, and have an underlying condition increasing their vulnerability to COVID-19; sets the benefit at a monthly payment of $1,500, with possible need based increases. NOTE: Designated an emergency law, allowing for it to take immediate effect upon passage.

Status
Filed in the House

Last Action
03/24/2020 H - Filed in the House

Actions
03/24/2020 H - Filed in the House

HD4977 - An Act providing emergency assistance for municipal public safety overtime

Sponsor
Rep. Hannah Kane (R)
Summary

Directs the executive office of public safety and security to establish a grant program, assist cities and towns in addressing overtime costs of municipal police officers, municipal law enforcement personnel with arrest powers, municipal personnel with authority to enforce public health regulations, members of the fire department, and emergency medical technicians during the COVID-19 state of emergency.

Status

Filed in the House

Last Action

03/24/2020 H - Filed in the House

Actions

03/24/2020 H - Filed in the House

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**HD4975 - An Act establishing a COVID-19 food service and hospitality worker relief fund.**

**Sponsor**

Rep. William Smitty Pignatelli (D)

**Summary**

Establishes the COVID-19 Food Service and Hospitality Worker Relief Emergency Fund, administered by the executive office of labor and workforce development, for the purpose of providing financial assistance to individuals employed in the food service and hospitality industries, that have been laid off or are otherwise experiencing financial distress due to the COVID-19 state of emergency; directs the comptroller to transfer $75,000,000 to such fund. NOTE: Designated an emergency law, allowing for it to take immediate effect upon passage.

**Status**

Filed in the House

**Last Action**

03/24/2020 H - Filed in the House

**Actions**

03/24/2020 H - Filed in the House

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**HD4980 - An Act providing out-of-state medical licensing reciprocity during the COVID-19 emergency**

**Sponsor**
Rep. Patrick Kearney (D)

Summary

Allows medical personnel with out of state licensure to practice in Massachusetts as part of the response to COVID-19 for the duration of the state of emergency, plus an additional 30 days; grants the Commissioner of Public Health the authority to approve this temporary licensure. NOTE: Designated an emergency law, allowing for it to take immediate effect upon passage.

Status

Filed in the House

Last Action

03/25/2020 H - Filed in the House

Actions

03/25/2020 H - Filed in the House

HD4981 - An Act relating to ballot nominations during the state of emergency due to COVID-19

Sponsor

Rep. Patrick Kearney (D)

Summary

Directs the Secretary of the Commonwealth to waive two-thirds of the signature requirements for nominations in all state elections (e.g., signature requirements for state representatives would be reduced from 150 to 50); provides for these lowered signature requirements to expire after the 2020 elections. NOTE: Designated an emergency law, allowing for it to take immediate effect upon passage.

Status

Filed in the House

Last Action

03/25/2020 H - Filed in the House

Actions

03/25/2020 H - Filed in the House

SD2889 - An Act establishing a COVID-19 homeowner protection act

Sponsor
Sen. Michael O. Moore (D)

Summary

Amends GL 244:35A (Right of residential real property mortgagor to cure a default) to add several protections for homeowners during the ongoing COVID-19 emergency; bars lenders from initiating foreclosure proceedings for the duration of the state of emergency, plus an additional 90 days; allows homeowners experiencing financial hardship to forbear mortgage payments for 180 days; bars lenders from reporting this forbearance as a late payment to credit rating agencies, or otherwise penalizing homeowners who take advantage of this provision; requires lenders to work with homeowners to resume payments; provides for these provisions to expire 180 days after the end of the state of emergency.

Status

Filed in the Senate

Last Action

03/25/2020 S - Filed in the Senate

Actions

03/25/2020 S - Filed in the Senate

HD4986 - An Act relative to Small Churches economic stimulus package in Gateway cities during the COVID-19 pandemic

Sponsor

Rep. Carlos Gonzalez (D)

Summary

Establishes a grant program for small community churches in Gateway Cities with fewer than 100 members; awards eligible churches $10,000 in order to establish an online platform for use during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Status

Filed in the House

Last Action

03/26/2020 H - Filed in the House

Actions

03/26/2020 H - Filed in the House

HD4985 - An Act relative to a Micro-Business stimulus package COVID-19 pandemic
Sponsor
Rep. Carlos Gonzalez (D)

Summary
Establishes a grant program for micro-businesses which have under 5 employees and generated under $200,000 in revenue in 2018; awards eligible businesses $15,000 and requires 75% of the grant to be spent on employee compensation.

Status
Filed in the House

Last Action
03/26/2020 H - Filed in the House

Actions
03/26/2020 H - Filed in the House

HD4984 - An Act relative to internet access during the COVID-19 pandemic

Sponsor
Rep. Carlos Gonzalez (D)

Summary
Requires internet service providers in Massachusetts to provide the highest bandwidth possible for residential customers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Status
Filed in the House

Last Action
03/26/2020 H - Filed in the House

Actions
03/26/2020 H - Filed in the House

HD4987 - An Act providing emergency assistance to gateway cities for temporary homeless shelters

Sponsor
Rep. Daniel Donahue (D)
HD4990 - An Act providing state tax filing relief due to COVID-19

Summary
Extends the filing deadline for state income tax returns until July 15, 2020, without interest or penalty. NOTE: Designated an emergency law, allowing for it to take immediate effect upon passage.

Status
Filed in the House

Last Action
03/26/2020 H - Filed in the House

Actions
03/26/2020 H - Filed in the House

HD4926 - An Act establishing the COVID-19 Quarantine Assistance Fund

Summary
Establishes and regulates the funding and use of the COVID-19 Quarantine Assistance Fund, to be administered by the secretary of health and human services; requires use of the fund for grants to residents of the commonwealth who become unable to earn wages due to a COVID-19 infection,
quarantine or isolation period. NOTE: Designated an emergency law, allowing for it to take immediate effect upon passage.

**Status**
Filed in the House

**Last Action**
03/11/2020 H - Filed in the House

**Actions**
03/11/2020 H - Filed in the House

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**HD4937 - An Act establishing a COVID-19 economic stabilization emergency fund for host communities of institutions of higher education**

**Sponsor**
Rep. Mindy Domb (D)

**Summary**
Establishes and regulates the use of the COVID-19 Economic Stabilization Emergency Fund; directs the executive office of housing and economic development to administer the fund to provide financial assistance to small businesses, non-profits and municipalities that host public and private institutions of higher education that have closed in response to the 2020 COVID-19 outbreak; allows use of the fund to cover loss of revenue, unexpected expenses, and loss of contributions, grants or other financial assistance; requires the transfer of $125,000,000 to the fund. NOTE: Designated an emergency law, allowing for it to take immediate effect upon passage. NOTE: Designated an emergency law, allowing for it to take immediate effect upon passage.

**Status**
Filed in the House

**Last Action**
03/13/2020 H - Filed in the House

**Actions**
03/13/2020 H - Filed in the House

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**HD4936 - An Act establishing a COVID-19 Emergency Fund for Public Higher Education Institutions**

**Sponsor**
Rep. Mindy Domb (D)

Summary

Establishes and regulates the use of the COVID-19 Public Institutions of Higher Education Emergency Fund; directs the board of higher education to administer the fund to provide financial assistance to public institutions of higher education for loss of revenue, unexpected expenses, including increased safety and security, implementation of virtual classes and loss of contributions, grants or financial assistance; allows use of the fund to cover employees for lost wages, expanded sick time costs and other costs; requires the transfer of $125,000,000 to the fund. NOTE: Designated an emergency law, allowing for it to take immediate effect upon passage.

Status

Filed in the House

Last Action

03/13/2020 H - Filed in the House

Actions

03/13/2020 H - Filed in the House

HD4934 - An Act providing certain state employees sick leave for COVID-19 related absences

Sponsor

Rep. James J. O'Day (D)

Summary

Entitles any state employee who is absent from work due to COVID-19 infection, quarantine or isolation, and who does not have sufficient earned sick leave time for the absence, to paid leave for the duration of their COVID-19 related absence.

Status

Filed in the House

Last Action

03/13/2020 H - Filed in the House

Actions

03/13/2020 H - Filed in the House

HD4939 - An Act establishing a COVID-19 emergency fund for regional transportation authorities
Sponsor
Rep. Mindy Domb (D)

Summary
Establishes and regulates the use of the COVID-19 Regional Transport Authority Emergency Fund; directs the executive office of transportation and public works to administer the fund to provide financial assistance to regional transit authorities in response to the 2020 COVID-19 outbreak; allows use of the fund to cover loss of revenue, unexpected expenses, including increased staffing, sanitization of vehicles, joint procurements, and loss of contributions, grants or other financial assistance; requires the transfer of $50,000,000 to the fund. NOTE: Designated an emergency law, allowing for it to take immediate effect upon passage.

Status
Filed in the House

Last Action
03/13/2020 H - Filed in the House

Actions
03/13/2020 H - Filed in the House

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HD4945 - An Act providing for emergency cash assistance in response to COVID-19

Sponsor
Rep. Tami Gouveia (D)

Summary
Directs the department of revenue to send all qualifying households a check for $1,000 within 30 days of passage; defines qualifying households as those with 1 to 2 person households earning up to $84,000 annually or; 3 person households earning up to $105,000 annually or; 4 or more person households earning up to $131,000 annually; limits qualified households to those with Massachusetts residents who filed 2018 Massachusetts income tax returns; entities households that did not file 2018 income tax returns to the stimulus payment if they can demonstrate household income and size; provides for an additional $500 payment per dependent. NOTE: Designated an emergency law, allowing for it to take immediate effect upon passage.

Status
Filed in the House

Last Action
03/16/2020 H - Filed in the House

Actions
03/16/2020 H - Filed in the House
HD4949 - An Act providing worker compensation protection to emergency response and medical personnel related to COVID-19 infection

Sponsor
Rep. Chris Hendricks (D)

Summary
Establishes a new GL 152:7H (Workers’ Compensation) to streamline workers’ compensation claims for EMTs and emergency room or urgent care personnel who have been diagnosed with COVID-19; requires that the diagnosis be taken as evidence that the employee was performing their regular duties when they contracted the virus, that they are eligible for workers' compensation, and that sufficient notice of the injury has been givenNOTE: Designated an emergency law, allowing for it to take immediate effect upon passage.

Status
Filed in the House

Last Action
03/17/2020 H - Filed in the House

Actions
03/17/2020 H - Filed in the House

HD4950 - An Act providing emergency access to equity and justice for all in response to COVID-19

Sponsor
Rep. Liz Miranda (D)

Summary
Directs the department of revenue to establish an online equity and justice (EAJ) portal, where Massachusetts residents can register for COVID-19 EAJ assistance; details information to be collected during registration, including validating their residency since January 1, 2020; requires the portal to be available in various languages; additionally directs DOR to send a check of $1,000 to each registrant, plus $750 per dependent; directs DOR to send additional checks every 30 days to registrants facing financial hardship with the various income levels relative to the 2020 federal poverty levels; requires continuation of such assistance until all state and federal emergency statuses are lifted; prohibits use of EAJ income to determine eligibility for other forms of public assistance; qualifies those without affordable health care for MassHealth.&nbsp;Additionally directs the Massachusetts office of business development to develop the small business recovery grant fund; requires use of the fund to provide emergency funds in amounts up to $50,000 to small Massachusetts-based businesses impacted by COVID-19; limits eligible companies to those with up to 26 full time and part-
time employees.&nbsp;NOTE: Designated an emergency law, allowing for it to take immediate effect upon passage.

Status
Filed in the House

Last Action
03/17/2020 H - Filed in the House

Actions
03/17/2020 H - Filed in the House

HD4956 - An Act providing for a Rent Increase Freeze in response to COVID-19

Sponsor
Rep. Lindsay Sabadosa (D)

Summary
Temporarily suspends portions of the Rent Control Prohibition Act (GL 40P) and directs the Department of Housing and Community Development to enforce a rent freeze for the duration of the COVID-19 state of emergency, and an additional 30 days; additionally authorizes municipalities to enforce this rent freeze. NOTE: Designated an emergency law, allowing for it to take immediate effect upon passage.

Status
Filed in the House

Last Action
03/18/2020 H - Filed in the House

Actions
03/18/2020 H - Filed in the House

HD4955 - An Act providing for a MassHealth expansion in response to COVID-19

Sponsor
Rep. Lindsay Sabadosa (D)

Summary
Amends GL 118E:9A (MassHealth) to expand access to MassHealth for all those who qualify for unemployment benefits, and all who are directly impacted by the COVID-19 state of
Amends GL 151A:24 (eligibility for benefits) to expand eligibility for unemployment benefits for independent contractors, sole proprietors, partners in a partnership, freelance, and tipped employees, as long as they are directly impacted by the COVID-19 state of emergency; clarifies that receipt of any cash assistance stemming from the state or federal response to COVID-19 does not affect eligibility for unemployment benefits; protects against any potential penalties for receiving unemployment benefits and bars any attempts to force repayment of benefits. NOTE: Designated an emergency law, allowing for it to take immediate effect upon passage.

Status
Filed in the House

Last Action
03/18/2020 H - Filed in the House

Actions
03/18/2020 H - Filed in the House

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**HD4958 - An Act relative to COVID-19 emergency unemployment insurance expansion**

**Sponsor**
Rep. Paul W. Mark (D)

**Summary**
Amends GL 151A:24 (eligibility for benefits) to expand eligibility for unemployment benefits for independent contractors, sole proprietors, partners in a partnership, freelance, and tipped employees, as long as they are directly impacted by the COVID-19 state of emergency; clarifies that receipt of any cash assistance stemming from the state or federal response to COVID-19 does not affect eligibility for unemployment benefits; protects against any potential penalties for receiving unemployment benefits and bars any attempts to force repayment of benefits. NOTE: Designated an emergency law, allowing for it to take immediate effect upon passage.

Status
Filed in the House

Last Action
03/18/2020 H - Filed in the House

Actions
03/18/2020 H - Filed in the House

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**HD4965 - An Act establishing a COVID-19 Local Food Access Emergency Fund**

**Sponsor**
Rep. Mindy Domb (D)

**Summary**
Establishes the COVID-19 Local Food Access Emergency Fund, administered by the Department of Transitional Assistance for the purpose of financially supporting local food pantries; directs the comptroller to transfer $50 million to the fund.

**Status**

Filed in the House

**Last Action**

03/20/2020 H - Filed in the House

**Actions**

03/20/2020 H - Filed in the House

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**HD4964 - An Act relative to acting mayors during COVID-19 State of Emergency**

**Sponsor**

Rep. Jonathan D. Zlotnik (D)

**Summary**

Ensures that any acting mayors possess the full breadth of mayoral powers for the duration of the COVID-19 state of emergency, including to make appointments.

**Status**

Filed in the House

**Last Action**

03/20/2020 H - Filed in the House

**Actions**

03/20/2020 H - Filed in the House

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**HD4963 - An Act regarding Decarceration and COVID-19**

**Sponsor**

Rep. Lindsay Sabadosa (D)

**Summary**

Creates a new GL 276:99H to discourage the incarceration of nonviolent offenders or vulnerable detainees during the ongoing public health crisis; requires Pretrial Services, Sheriffs overseeing a House of Correction, and the Department of Correction to review their cases and release individuals who pose no immediate threat to the community, are being charged with simple possession of controlled substances, are over fifty years old, are part of a population particularly
vulnerable to COVID-19, are within 6 months of completing their sentence, and those who are being detained due to inability to afford bail, or failure to pay fines and fees; allows exemptions for dangerousness; requires Sheriffs and DOC to submit a list of detainees who meet these qualifications, but who are not being released, to the Committee for Public Counsel Services so they can be assigned an attorney. Adds several new sections to GL 27 (Department of Correction) requiring the Parole Board to review the cases of each individual who is within six months of their initial parole eligibility date or who has reached their initial parole eligibility date, but was denied parole; requires the release of individuals who pose no immediate threat to the community, are incarcerated due to technical violations of parole, are within 6 months of their initial parole eligibility, and those who have been previously denied parole; requires the Parole Board to submit a list of detainees who meet these qualifications, but who are not being released, to the Committee for Public Counsel Services so they can be assigned an attorney. Requires Sheriffs and DOC to work with public health officials to ensure the health and safety of inmates during the COVID-19 pandemic, including by minimizing the sharing of cells, ensuring access to soap and disinfectant, and ensuring adequate quarantine capacity. NOTE: Designated an emergency law, allowing for it to take immediate effect upon passage.

Status
Filed in the House

Last Action
03/20/2020 H - Filed in the House

Actions
03/20/2020 H - Filed in the House

HD4961 - An Act suspending student loan debt due to the COVID-19 emergency

Sponsor
Rep. Mindy Domb (D)

Summary
Suspends payments of student loans owed to state agencies, pursuant to EO 519 for 360 days after the expiration of the order; converts all special obligations used to provide student loans into general obligations of the Commonwealth. NOTE: Designated an emergency law, allowing for it to take immediate effect upon passage.

Status
Filed in the House

Last Action
03/20/2020 H - Filed in the House

Actions
03/20/2020 H - Filed in the House
HD4970 - An Act relative to state employees performing core functions

Sponsor
Rep. Tackey Chan (D)

Summary
Requires time and a half compensation for public employees who are directed to report to work outside their homes during the COVID-19 state of emergency; allows eligible employees to opt to receive compensatory leave instead of additional pay.

Status
Filed in the House

Last Action
03/23/2020 H - Filed in the House

Actions
03/23/2020 H - Filed in the House