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Dear Natick Officials,

I am pleased to share details of the **\$56.2-billion Fiscal Year 2024 (FY24) budget** that the Massachusetts Legislature unanimously sent to the Governor and was signed into law in August.

When I look at this budget, I see investments and policies that will keep us competitive for years to come through supporting middleclass working people and families—and making our Commonwealth more inclusive, affordable, and equitable.

The **Student Opportunity Plan** that the Senate proposed in January is becoming a reality as we make investments in education at every level with this budget. Early education and care will become more affordable, our commitment to high quality K-12 education continues, and we are working towards giving every student who wants to go to college the opportunity to do so.

In addition, the dream for free community college—which I was thrilled to share with Governor Healey—is becoming closer to reality, as we invest in:

- MassReconnect for students aged 25 and older to attend community college tuition-free this fall;
- Free community college for the nursing students we so desperately need, also this fall; and
- Laying the groundwork for universal free community college in 2024.

We are also making historic investments in mental health, so that affordable, accessible, and comprehensive mental healthcare is available to more of our residents.

This budget represents a **\$3.8-billion increase over that of Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23)**, based on a tax revenue estimate of \$40.41 billion for FY24, 1.6 per cent growth and \$1 billion in new Fair Share revenue. It also builds up the state's stabilization fund, which has grown to a record high of \$7.16 billion and is projected to close FY24 at \$9.5 billion—ensuring healthy reserves during a time of ongoing economic volatility.

The FY24 budget includes \$1.27 billion in funding for Unrestricted General Government Aid (UGGA), an increase of \$39.4 million over FY 2023, to support additional resources for cities and towns.

Statewide, the budget delivers historic levels of investment in education, including:

- **\$6.59 billion in Chapter 70** funding, an increase of \$604 million over FY23;
- **A doubling of minimum Chapter 70** aid from \$30 to \$60 per pupil;

- **\$1.5 billion investment in early education and care**—the largest-ever annual appropriation for early education and care in Massachusetts history;
- **\$504.5 million for the special education (SPED) circuit breaker**;
- **\$97.1 million to reimburse school districts for regional school transportation costs**, representing a 90 percent reimbursement rate; and
- **\$171.5 million to require public schools to provide universal school meals to all students free of charge**.

For Natick: **Chapter 70 education aid** will increase by \$946,890 over FY23 for a total of **\$13,165,735** in FY24. Natick will receive **\$4,555,463** in FY24 **Unrestricted General Government Aid** for community investments in education, public safety, roads and bridges, and health care.

In addition, the budget includes the following investments specifically for Natick:

- \$100,000 for Cochituate Aqueduct trail accessibility improvements
- \$100,000 for Natick Public Schools' online tutoring service
- \$15,000 for Sudbury Aqueduct Trail feasibility study
- \$25,000 for Natick 180 Coalition
- \$30,000 for Veterans Oral History Project
- \$50,000 for Natick Public Schools' afterschool buses
- \$50,000 for NPS staff development to support the profile of Natick educator competencies
- \$25,000 for Natick Fire Department personal protective equipment
- \$25,000 for pedestrian walking beacons

I have also ensured that the budget also supports these needs in our region: **\$600,000** for mental health services in schools in my Senate District (an increase of \$100,000 over last year); **\$300,000** for SMOC's transportation pilot program and triage case management; **\$250,000** for TEMPO at Wayside Youth & Family Support; **\$1.1 million** for Call 2 Talk; **\$35,000** for RIA House; **\$50,000** for Serenity House; **\$75,000** for Veterans Services of the MetroWest District; and **\$25,000** for the MetroWest Food Collaborative.

Shortly, you will receive follow up from my staff outlining the steps for receiving these funds.

As always, if you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact Karen Adelman-Foster (Karen.Adelman-Foster@masenate.gov) in my office. I look forward to continuing to work with you to make Natick even stronger.

Best,



Senate President Karen E. Spilka
Second Middlesex & Norfolk District