



March 8, 2021

Representative Aaron Michlewitz, Chair
House Committee on Ways and Means
24 Beacon St, Room 243
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Ann-Margaret Ferrante, Vice Chair
House Committee on Ways and Means
24 Beacon St, Room 42
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chair Michlewitz and Vice Chair Ferrante,

The Chamber appreciates your efforts to prepare a balanced FY 2022 budget that strategically and equitably makes investments in the Commonwealth. As you review H1 for FY 2022, we respectfully request that you consider the following provisions that will impact our region's economic recovery and competitiveness:

Investments in Workforce Development

\$15.4 million to the **Career Technical Institutes**, line-item 7002-1091

The Chamber supports increased funding for the Career Technical Institutes, which is projected to train 20,000 new workers in skilled trades in the next four years. Career Technical Institutes have the potential to increase the number of skilled workers ready to enter stable career tracks in a variety of trades.

\$1.5 million for **Career and Technical Education**, line-item 7035-0001

The Chamber supports allocating \$1.5 million for the Career and Technical Education (CTE) program that provides access to CTE for students who are not enrolled in full-time CTE programs. CTE delivers effective training to students, ensuring that their skills can successfully meet the present and future demands of employers. With this funding, the CTE programs will have the resources to expand and support student development in a range of specialties.

\$7 million transfer to the **Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund**, line-item 1595-1075

The Chamber supports continued funding for the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund at \$7 million. During the state's economic recovery and beyond, closing the skills gap by investing in the Workforce Competitive Trust Fund will be a priority. The Trust Fund supports demand-driven training for unemployed and underemployed individuals through industry partnerships.

\$500,000 for the **Registered Apprenticeship Expansion**, line-item 7003-0151

The Chamber supports funding the Registered Apprenticeship Expansion at \$500,000. In the years ahead, training new employees through apprenticeships in key sectors, including the health care, manufacturing, and information technology industries, will continue to be a priority for the Commonwealth's road to economic recovery.

\$2.5 million to **Early College Programs**, line-item 7009-6600

The Chamber supports continued funding for Early College programs. Early College promotes educational equity for all students by providing college courses to high school students at no cost. Due to the pandemic, there has been a decline in students of color attending college, and Early College serves as an effective pathway to a college degree and employment.

\$300,000 to **Learn to Earn**, line-item 7002-1080

The Chamber supports funding the Learn to Earn program, which equips unemployed and underemployed individuals with the skills and credentials needed to achieve sustained economic stability.

Organized by Commonwealth Corporation, partners create occupational training and placement programs to increase the worker's income, economic stability, and meet the state's need for skilled talent.

\$6 million to the **School to Career Connecting Activities**, line-item 7027-0019

The Chamber supports funding the School to Career Connecting Activities line-item, an initiative of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education that provides internships, career exploration, and employment opportunities to youth throughout the Commonwealth. Creating a career pipeline through the Connecting Activities initiative ensures that youth have expanded access and exposure to a variety of careers and specialties.

\$16.2 million for **Summer Jobs Program for At-Risk Youth**, line-item 7002-0012

The Chamber supports funding the Summer Jobs Program for At-Risk Youth, an important program that provides employment during the summer months to at-risk youth. Private businesses and organizations can also participate in this successful summer jobs program by hiring youth and giving them first-hand experience in workplaces.

Investments in Education to Close Achievement Gaps

\$1.5 million for the **STEM Pipeline Fund**, line-item 1595-7066

The Chamber supports funding the STEM Pipeline Fund, which aims to increase the number of students participating in science, technology, engineering and mathematics programs and careers. This fund also improves STEM educational course offerings and training for STEM teachers.

\$5.9 million to the **21st Century Education Trust Fund**, line-item 7010-2100

The Chamber supports funding the 21st Century Education Trust Fund, which was established by the Student Opportunity Act. This program allows districts and schools to apply for competitive grants to fund evidence-based practices aimed at closing opportunity and achievement gaps.

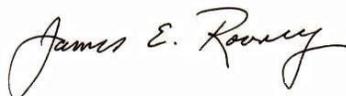
Investments in Economic Development

\$4 million to **Small Business Technical Assistance Grant Program**, line-item 7002-0040

The Chamber supports continued funding for the Massachusetts Growth Capital Corporation (MGCC) Small Business Technical Assistance Grant Program. The grant program provides funding to support small businesses through access to capital, business training, and other necessary resources. The Commonwealth's investments in small businesses are the key to a robust and equitable economic recovery.

The Chamber looks forward to continuing to work with the Legislature in the FY2022 budget to ensure that it helps to secure the Commonwealth's swift and equitable recovery. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,



James E. Rooney
President and CEO

CC: House Committee on Ways and Means