



May 21, 2021

Senator Karen Spilka, President
Massachusetts Senate
State House, Room 332
Boston, MA 02133

Senator Michael Rodrigues, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways and Means
State House, Room 212
Boston, MA 02133

Dear President Spilka and Chairman Rodrigues,

The Chamber appreciates your efforts to prepare a balanced FY 2022 budget that strategically and equitably invests in the Commonwealth. As you begin debate on S.3 for FY 2022, we respectfully request that you **support** the following provisions that will positively impact the state's economic recovery and competitiveness:

Investments in Workforce Development

\$2.5 million for **Career and Technical Education**, line-item 7035-0001

The Chamber supports allocating \$2.5 million for the Career and Technical Education (CTE) program that provides access to CTE for new and existing students who are not enrolled in full-time CTE programs. CTE delivers technical training to students, ensuring that their skills can meet the present and future demands of employers. With this funding, CTE programs will have the resources to expand and support student development in a range of specialties.

\$10 million transfer to the **Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund**, line-item 1595-1075

The Chamber supports continued funding for the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund at \$10 million because it supports demand-driven training for unemployed and underemployed individuals through industry partnerships. As demand shifts upward for the full reopening of the Massachusetts economy, matching industry partners with untapped labor will be crucial in reaching a full economic recovery.

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

The Chamber supports continued funding for the Registered Apprenticeship Expansion at \$500,000. This program provides practical on-the-job training, which is especially vital for the key sectors of health care, manufacturing, and information technology. As the state moves ahead to a full economic reopening, the demand for skilled workers will be paramount and this funding will provide the training tools to help meet employer's needs. This item has funding parity from H.1, H.4001, and S.3, showing broad support for this program.

\$5 million to **Early College Programs**, line-item 7009-6600

The Chamber supports \$5 million to fund Early College Programs because they promote educational equity for all students by providing college courses to high school students at no cost. Due to the pandemic, there is a decline in students of color attending college, and Early College is one pathway to a college degree and employment. S.3 provides an additional \$2.5 million in funding for this line item compared with H.1 and H.4001.

\$7 million to the **School to Career Connecting Activities**, line-item 7027-0019

The Chamber supports \$7 million to fund the School to Career Connecting Activities line-item because it creates a career pipeline to ensure youth have expanded access and exposure to a variety of careers and specialties. An initiative of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the program provides internships, career exploration, and employment opportunities to youth throughout the Commonwealth.

\$23 million for **Summer Jobs Program for At-Risk Youth**, line-item 7002-0012

The Chamber supports \$23 million to fund the Summer Jobs Program for At-Risk Youth because it provides employment during the summer months to at-risk youth. Private businesses and organizations may also participate in this successful summer jobs program by hiring youth and giving them first-hand experience in the workplace. The Chamber urges the Senate to maintain the level of funding proposed by the Senate Ways and Means Committee. As the state reopens, we expect summer job openings to grow and this program will link young jobseekers with these new opportunities.

Investments in Education to Close Achievement Gap

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

The Chamber supports \$1.5 million to fund the STEM Pipeline Fund. This fund helps grow the number of students in technical fields, which is critical to matching skilled employees with industry demands. This program aims to increase the number of students participating in science, technology, engineering and mathematics programs and careers and improves STEM educational course offerings and training for STEM teachers. Funding parity across H.1, H.4001, and S.3 is a sign of the common support for this fund.

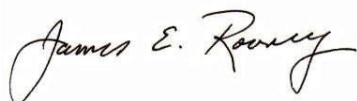
Investments in Economic Development

SUPPORT Amendment #748: Small Business Technical Assistance, line-item 7002-0040

The Commonwealth's investments in small businesses are key to a robust and equitable economic recovery. To help drive the recovery, Massachusetts must provide small businesses with the resources necessary to address workforce needs and rebuild operational capacity. The Chamber supports the adoption of amendment #748, offered by Senator Collins. This amendment would raise the appropriation for the Small Business Technical Assistance line item (7002-0040) from \$5 million to \$10 million. The reopening is a much-anticipated milestone for small businesses and this increased technical assistance will go a long way in helping businesses through the reopening process.

The Chamber looks forward to continuing to work with the Legislature on the FY 2022 budget to assist the Commonwealth in a swift and equitable recovery. Please reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,



James E. Rooney
President and CEO

CC: Members of the Massachusetts Senate