COVID-19 pandemic, was scheduled to reopen on July 6 with the aim of welcoming 100 babies in the first year. CHA said the center would serve all patients but have a "special focus on vulnerable and underserved populations who will benefit most from midwifery care and a birth center experience."

But no deliveries happened this summer, even as supporters of the 2024 maternal health law tried to create new urgency around bolstering access to care and removing healthcare disparities for people of color.

"The Birth Center has been open for prenatal and outpatient visits," CHA spokesperson David Cecere told the News Service Thursday. "We are anticipating our first delivery this week -- they had been on hold as we worked through a leadership transition."

Cecere said that "unexpected turnover" prompted the center to "hold deliveries until we established a plan to ensure high quality care and an exceptional patient experience."

A spokesperson for the Department of Public Health, asked whether it was aware of any paused operations or staffing issues, said DPH had called the birth center and was told it was "taking clients."

CHA has said the reopening would not have been possible without $1 million in state funding, which Cambridge Rep. Marjorie Decker helped secure in the fiscal 2024 budget. The center also received a grant from Beth Israel Lahey Health to help cover training, equipment, and community education and outreach.

The birth center, situated in a Victorian home with three renovated birthing rooms, held an open house on June 17 with more than 200 attendees, according to CHA. Speakers included Decker, U.S. Rep. Katherine Clark, Sen. Sal DiDomenico, Cambridge Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui and Public Health Commissioner Robbie Goldstein.

"Too often we are talking about the closure of maternity services, but today we get to celebrate a spectacular rebirth – and one that I hope will be followed by many more," Goldstein said in a statement at the time. "Expanding access to community-based, relationship-centered care is key in advancing health equity. The reopening of the CHA Birth Center supports families who deserve more options for culturally responsive maternity care."

Clark said the reopening was a "signal to women everywhere that we can and will keep making progress on maternal health."
"We're going to keep fighting for a healthcare system worthy of every mother in this community and a future worthy of the children who will begin their lives at CHA," she said.

Michele Helgeson, a member of the Community Coalition for the Cambridge Birth Center, said everything had seemed "very positive" and "very, very upbeat" surrounding the open house. The coalition has met with CHA leaders to advocate for community interests and promote a midwifery model of care.

"There was no indication that there was any reason to stop or pause at that point," said Helgeson, who added she wants to see CHA conduct community outreach and

assure patients about available services at the birth center.

Birth centers are seen as alternatives to hospital deliveries, particularly in low-risk pregnancies. The facilities offer a home-like environment and are staffed by midwives who can provide more personalized care.

The 2024 law removed regulatory barriers to opening freestanding birth centers and created a pathway for certified professional midwives to become licensed. The state started accepting applications for temporary CPM licensure last month, as DPH expects to issue regulations for "standard" licensure in early 2027.

Until the CHA Birth Center returned to the maternal health landscape, Massachusetts was home to only one such freestanding facility in Northampton. But Seven Sisters Midwifery and Community Birth Center faces intense financial pressure due to low reimbursement rates compared to services provided in hospitals, according to owner and clinical director Ginny Miller.

Legislation (S 784) to ensure that certified nurse midwives, certified professional midwives and licensed freestanding birth centers are not paid less than physicians and hospitals delivering the same services has been lodged in the Senate Ways and Means Committee since April.

Kimberly Amsley-Camp was the CHA's director of midwifery from August 2025 through September 2026, and she managed a staff of 20 certified nurse midwives and nurse practitioners, according to her LinkedIn profile. Working with a "multi-disciplinary" team, Amsley-Camp wrote she "planned and developed reopening of a hospital owned freestanding birth center."

Amsley-Camp did not respond to a News Service request for comment.

Cecere said consultant and certified nurse midwife Erin Stein is now overseeing "daily operations" of the CHA Birth Center. She's working alongside Dr. Tara Singh, chief of obstetrics and gynecology, and Allisyn Brady, senior director of OB/GYN.

Helgeson said the coalition wants to meet with CHA leaders and get an update on birth center operations, though she expects that won't happen until November due to scheduling logistics.

"There is definitely support for the sustainability of the birth center, and that's really what we're hoping to achieve in the long run," Helgeson said. "The opening is important, but we really want it to succeed in the long-term as well."

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Personnel File - Tuesday, Oct. 6, 2026
Who's on the move?
State House News Service

A former aide to Gov. Romney is about to become Trial Court administrator ... An influential healthcare trade association has a new interim president and executive vice president ... The Boston Bar Association has elected a partner at Nutter as its new president ... There's a new crop of directors on the New England Council's board ... The Boston Green Ribbon Commission hired its first director of decarbonization

and energy transition ... Please enjoy the latest Personnel File ...

COELHO

The seven Supreme Judicial Court justices selected MICHAEL COELHO, a former legislative director to Gov. Mitt Romney and Executive Office of Public Safety official, to take over as administrator of the Trial Court starting Oct. 13. Coelho will succeed THOMAS AMBROSINO, who retired Sept. 18. Coelho currently works as deputy commissioner of programs in the Office of the Commissioner of Probation, a role in which he manages the Massachusetts Probation Service's involvement in the operation of specialty courts, the interstate compact unit, the substance use testing program, and reentry and sober housing placements. The Trial Court administrator works with the chief justice of the Trial Court to run the largest component of the state's judicial branch, with seven court departments, over 6,400 employees and 94 courthouses. Coelho worked three years as assistant secretary for policy and planning at EOPSS and, prior to that, was the secretariat's chief of staff. He had prior experience as legislative director for Romney.

SROCZYNSKI

MIKE SROCZYNSKI started work as interim president & CEO of the Massachusetts Health and Hospital Association as outgoing MHA chief STEVE WALSH officially began work as president and CEO of the American Hospital Association. Sroczynski has been working as president of the Hospital Association of Rhode Island since September 2025, and before that was MHA's executive vice president and general counsel. "Over the years, but especially over the past decade, many of the strategies, advocacy, outreach, and communications that MHA undertook were often preceded by a 'run it by Mike' review that allowed Sroczynski to shape or review the policy before it left the building. His ability to see the big picture implications of each individual action MHA undertook helped provide a unified stance for MHA and the healthcare community," the MHA wrote in its weekly newsletter. LAUREN PETERS, the former executive director of the Center for Health Information and Analysis, is also now working at the MHA as executive vice president. She'll oversee policy and advocacy, data and analytics, and clinical and "innovation initiatives." Peters quietly left CHIA in January as she helped launch the Massachusetts Payer-Provider Partnership, which brings together insurers and hospitals to focus on healthcare affordability issues. The partnership is affiliated with the MHA but operates as an "autonomous entity." Peters will continue to helm the partnership as she takes on her new MHA role. She previously was undersecretary for the Executive Office of Health and Human Services and director of healthcare finance policy at the Executive Office for Administration and Finance. She earned her law degree from Suffolk University.

Mass Alliance for Early College recently announced two new hires: LIZ WALCZAK as director of external affairs and TOMAS MOLFINO as director of strategic initiatives. Walczak spent the past nine years as an independent philanthropy and nonprofit consultant, according to her LinkedIn. Before that, she was interim executive director for The Boston Opportunity Agenda from 2022 to 2023. Most recently, Molfino was program manager for WestEd, a nonprofit research, development and service agency, according to his LinkedIn. He was also a principal associate at Education Resource Strategies from 2021 to 2022.

FERRERA

DAVID FERRERA, a partner at Nutter McClennen & Fish LLP, was elected president of the Boston Bar Foundation – the charity arm of the Boston Bar Association. Ferrera has been with Nutter since 1995 and is the firm's chair of the product liability practice group, according to his LinkedIn. Ferrera has been on the Boston Bar Association's public service oversight committee, investment committee and the pro bono committee of the association's litigation section. He is also a member of the Boston Bar Foundation's grants committee and was chair from 2019-2023, according to a press release. "David's commitment to the legal field, track record of leadership within the BBA and BBF, and deep passion for supporting Boston's underserved communities makes him the perfect fit to guide the growth of our organization," Rich Page Jr., president of the Boston Bar Association, said in a statement.

McCARTHY

MICHAEL McCARTHY, Northern Essex Community College's executive vice president and CFO, was appointed to the Massachusetts Small Business Development Center's new statewide Advisory Council. The group brings together business, government, economic development and community leaders to shape the future of small business support. Members will discuss emerging issues affecting small businesses, opportunities for statewide collaboration and initiatives to bolster the state's entrepreneurial ecosystem. "Having Mike seated at this table will provide important perspectives on how local community colleges offer training to both employers and employees, build connections, offer professional certifications, and provide development guidance that leads to positive business growth," NECC President Lane Glenn said.

The New England Council's Board has a new slate of members after a recent election. They include MATTHEW BEATON of Haugland Group in Shrewsbury; BRYAN GUBBINS of Bond Brothers, Inc. in Medford; JASON JAKUBOWSKI of Connecticut Foodshare in Wallingford, Conn.; ROBERT McCARRON of the Association of Independent Colleges and Universities in Massachusetts; JACK MURPHY of BankNewport in Newport, Rhode Island; and HEATHER SCHUCHARDT of Ocean Spray in Lakeville. "As we continue our work to advocate for New England's economic well being, I trust that their diverse experience and expertise across a range of industries will be an asset to our board," council CEO Jim Brett said.

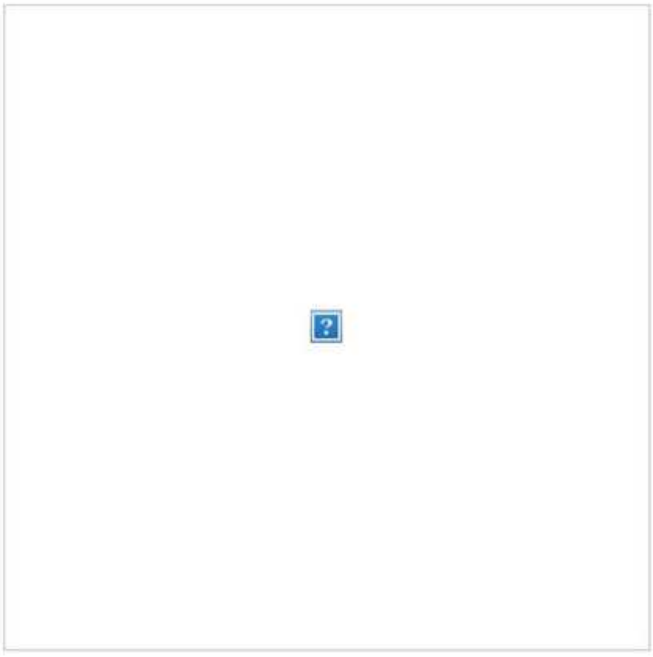
The New England Chapter of the National Association of Corporate Directors has announced five new board members: TRACY ATKINSON, HEATHER CAMPION, MICHAEL CURRY, JACK EGAN and DAMIAN WILMOT. Atkinson is a board member for both Citizens Financial Group and RTX, formerly known as Raytheon Technologies. Atkinson was also previously a director of Affiliated Managers Group and U.S. Steel and was executive vice president and chief administrative officer at State Street Corp. Campion is managing director DSG Global, where she founded the firm's strategic consulting practice. Before that, she was a principal at Mount Vernon Strategies and was CEO of the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation from 2014 to 2015, according to her LinkedIn. Curry is CEO and president of the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers and has been an elected member of the National NAACP's Board of Directors going on 12 years. Egan has served on boards for technology companies like EMC Corp. and VMware where he helped with transactions, including Dell's purchase of EMC for $67 billion, according to a press release. Wilmot is a board member for PBF Energy Inc. and Fidelity Charitable. "These five new Directors bring to NACDNE a profound wealth of experience, background, diverse perspectives, and deep connections throughout New England.

On behalf of the Chapter, I want to express our deep thanks to Damian, Heather, Jack, Michael, and Tracy for their willingness to offer their time, talent, and leadership to NACDNE," NACD New England Board Chair Cathy Minehan said in a statement.

YAEGER

ERICH YAEGER is the Boston Green Ribbon Commission's first director of decarbonization and energy transition. Before taking on his new role, Yaeger was sustainable operations manager at Harvard University from 2025 to August. He worked for Keurig Dr. Pepper Inc. from 2021 to 2025 as a senior corporate responsibility project manager and then environmental impact manager. His work at Keurig Dr. Pepper helped lead to the company's first production plant fully transitioning from natural gas to electricity. "His combination of technical expertise, firsthand understanding of the challenges facing our member institutions, and his love for Boston made him the perfect fit for the role. Bringing our first Director of Decarbonization and Energy Transition onto the leadership team marks an exciting milestone as the GRC deepens its focus on implementation," Boston Green Ribbon Commission Executive Director Lindsey Butler said in a statement.

-- Got a new chief of staff, executive director, campaign manager, press secretary, spokesperson, or otherwise important new person in your office or organization? Losing a valued worker to a new career opportunity? The News Service welcomes all personnel announcements, which will be aggregated for periodic publication, at personnelfile@statehousenews.com.



Questions?
Please reach out to Andrew Napolitano.

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Daily Advances & SHNS Articles

October 13, 2026

Gov. Maura Healey

.....Not yet available.....

Daily Events

9:00.....Transportation Oversight Division of the Department of Public Utilities holds hearings on applications for carrier certification. The division regulates rates and practices of carriers used to transport passengers, buses, towing companies and more.....One South Station, 3rd floor, Boston | More Info and Access

10:00.....Board of Registration in Podiatry meets virtually.....Agenda and Access

10:30.....Massport and elected officials celebrate the groundbreaking of a new remote terminal and two multilevel parking garages at the Braintree Logan Express site. The Logan Airport Remote Terminal at Braintree will be Massport's second remote location, following a pilot in Framingham. Eligible passengers can check luggage and clear TSA security off-site before boarding a locked bus directly to the post-security side at Logan Airport. Massport CEO Rich Davey, Congressman Lynch, Transportation Secretary and MBTA General Manager Eng, Sen. Driscoll, Rep. Cusack and Braintree Mayor Erin Joyce plan to attend.....Braintree Logan Express, 262 Forbes Rd., Braintree

10:30.....MassDOT Board of Directors Capital Programs Committee holds a meeting.....More Info and Access | Agenda

11:00.....Democrat Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll and GOP challenger Shawn Oliver debate.....GBH Boston Public Library Studio, 700 Boylston Street, Boston | GBH 88.7 FM | Livestream

11:00.....Restorative Justice Advisory Committee of the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security holds a remote meeting. Agenda includes 2026 goals and objectives and a discussion about the 2026 annual report.....More Info and Access

11:30.....Attorney General Andrea Campbell and Middlesex District Attorney Marian Ryan join Yes on 9 For a Safe Massachusetts, the campaign to keep the state's 2024 gun law on the books, for a roundtable discussion on the Nov. 3 ballot question. A yes vote on Question 9 preserves the 159-section law, which created stronger protections against ghost guns, outlawed machine gun conversion devices, and established a public gun data dashboard. The No on 9 campaign says the law features "sweeping mandates that turn law-abiding citizens into criminals overnight and force honest citizens to reapply for rights they've held for decades to comply with confusing, burdensome rules that violate due process and privacy." Media may RSVP to harry@ninetywest.com.....UTEC, 17 Warren Street, Lowell

12:00.....U.S. Senate candidate John Deaton holds a virtual lunchtime call with supporters ahead of his debate with Democrat Ed Markey later in the day. Deaton plans to discuss how his campaign's message is resonating and what to expect on the debate stage.....Zoom

1:30.....Personal Care Attendant Quality Workforce Council meets virtually. Agenda includes a MassHealth update and an executive director's report.....More Info and Access

2:00.....MassHousing Board meets remotely. The agenda includes a report from CEO Chrystal Kornegay and a vote approving an annual contribution to the Opportunity Fund as well as "other deposits." The agenda also shows that MassHousing and two of its subsidiaries - Center for Community Recovery Innovations and Property Acquisition and Disposition Corporation - will hold their annual meetings.....Access and More Info

5:30.....Democrat Ed Markey and Republican John Deaton debate. Markey has been in the Senate since 2013 and before that had been elected to the U.S. House since 1976. Deaton, a lawyer who ran against U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren two years ago, is angling to unseat Markey and become the first Republican elected to Congress from Massachusetts since Scott Brown in 2010. Political analyst Jon Keller moderates.....WBZ-TV, 1170 Soldiers Field Road, Boston

6:00.....Board of Elementary and Secondary Education meets to discuss proposed regulations related to the literacy law Gov. Healey signed in June, which requires districts to adopt DESE-approved evidence-based reading curricula, mandates bi-annual reading screenings for K-3 students, and creates new professional training requirements for educators.....Livestream

7:00.....CommonWealth Beacon hosts a debate on Question 3 to establish all-party primaries. Representing the "Yes on 3" campaign will be Danielle Allen, chair of the Coalition for Healthy Democracy. Representing the "No on 3" campaign will be Jordan Berg Powers, chair of Voting Rights MA. If approved, the question would reshape elections and the roles of political parties in Massachusetts. It would replace the system in which Republicans and Democrats have separate primary elections to select nominees for the general election, with one where all candidates appear on a single ballot and the top two advance, regardless of party registration. Reporters Jennifer Smith and Chris Lisinski moderate.....Room TC 103AB in the David Hartleb Technology Center, Northern Essex Community College, Haverhill | Livestream

The Legislature

11:00.....Senate meets.....Senate Chamber

11:00.....House meets in an informal session.....House Chamber

Editor's Notes:

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Costs cited for lack of required racial profiling reports
Proponent of reports says 'we can't manage what we don't measure'
Ella Adams

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, Oct. 12, 2026.....The Executive Office of Public Safety hasn't issued required reports analyzing racial profiling in traffic stops since 2024.

Before lawmakers passed a 2019 law banning motorists from using handheld electronic devices, there were months of controversial negotiations and calls by the NAACP and ACLU about how best to include language ensuring officers collected demographic traffic stop data in an attempt to address racial profiling.

Lawmakers decided the Registry of Motor Vehicles would be required to track the race, age and gender of every motorist at traffic stops that end in citations to monitor law enforcement for "disproportionate punishment of drivers." The public safety secretariat annually must give the RMV data to a Massachusetts-based university, nonprofit organization or institution "with experience in the analysis of such data for annual preparation of an analysis and report of its findings."

The Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) has issued two reports: one covering 2020 data released in 2022, and one covering 2021 and 2022 data released in 2024. Teams from Salem State University and Worcester State University completed both.

"The issuing of the report has been challenging for us," Public Safety Secretary Kwon told the Senate Post Audit and Oversight Committee at an Oct. 7 hearing. "The last time when we put out an RFP for it, the bids greatly exceeded our financial ability to pay for said report."

The reporting requirement was established without a dedicated funding source, EOPSS said when asked about its budget to pay for reports. The agency identified funding within its operating budget to support the initial research contract — which totaled about $300,000 for three years of services — and it said

proposals for subsequent procurement efforts in 2025 and 2026 have ranged from around $600,000 to $1 million.

"Traffic stops remain the most common point of contact between people and the police, and understanding the pattern of racial disparities is critical for communities, for legislators, for people who are directly impacted by negative police encounters, and for everyone who's interested in equity and justice in the Commonwealth," ACLU of Massachusetts Justice Policy Counsel Katy Naples-Mitchell said when asked about the lack of state reports.

"We can't manage what we don't measure," she added. According to the ACLU, there are also federal grants available to fund racial profiling studies.

"We are committed to adhering to law. We are looking at creative funding and fiscal

options to try to get the report out. It is something I recognize that we have not done," Kwon said. She said the requirement that EOPSS use a Massachusetts nonprofit or university is "maybe" a reason for "some of the difficulties that we've had with getting a research partner."

Sen. Mark Montigny, who chaired the hearing and was an architect of the 2019 law, told Kwon, "If there's not enough money and you can't find it creatively, you've got to come back to us."

Kwon named another challenge: "There's not really a clear, one way of analyzing the data. So when the initial report was issued, there was a lot of criticism in the methodology that the research partner used."

She said she doesn't believe there's "a national best practice that all racial disparity reports should be done in this way."

A summary of public comments received about the 2020 uniform citation data analysis report includes "methodological shortcomings," including that "the driving population needs to be identified as a starting point for analysis," and that there were "no verbal warning stops included." A 2023 USA Today investigation "raises serious questions about how the study was procured, influenced and framed by staff at the state's public safety agency," according to reporters, despite the agency saying researchers didn't find support for patterns of racial disparity.

Montigny replied to Kwon, "I have to believe that some state has done it well, and if not, I'd love to know because I always feel that the first thing we should do is look and see, you know, is there anyone who's got a best practice, or are we just reaching?"

"It's a tough subject, but after really tough negotiations, it is law. So we have to figure out how to solve it," Montigny continued.

The ACLU remains "very interested in seeing a commitment to a true independent analysis of data as part of that obligation under state law," Naples-Mitchell said.

The secretariat must make the annual analysis and report publicly available. If analysis and reports suggest that an agency has engaged in racial or gender profiling, that agency is required for a year to collect information, "including the reason for the stop, in addition to the other information already required under the Massachusetts Uniform Citation, on all traffic stops, including those not resulting in a warning, citation or arrest," and mandate implicit bias training.

EOPSS said data collection is ongoing and it is evaluating funding options. The agency in May issued a solicitation for bidders to "conduct yearly data analyses of law enforcement related state and local motor vehicle citations issued throughout the Commonwealth and provide [the Office of Grants and Research] with an annual report of its findings."

The public safety secretariat's fiscal 2026 budget totaled more than $1.6 billion, with appropriations for the Department of Correction and the State Police representing the two biggest accounts within the EOPSS budget.

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Weekly Roundup: Election Energy
Alison Kuznitz

BOSTON, Oct. 9, 2026.....The week began with an energy emergency, morphed into a battle over President Trump, and ended with a looming nurse strike — all while Beacon Hill and its 12 Democrat-controlled negotiating committees laid largely dormant.

With the first gubernatorial debate on her near-term calendar and no energy affordability legislative breakthrough in sight, Gov. Maura Healey took matters into her own hands.

Heating up her campaign talking points, Healey declared a "state of energy emergency" Monday in a bid to insulate Bay Staters from price gouging. She signed an executive order that creates a one-time home heating assistance benefit for middle-class households that rely on oil, expands assistance for low-income households, and temporarily removes clean energy charges from residential electric bills. The governor's office said the plan's costs will be covered with money from alternative compliance payments that electricity suppliers make to the state when they do not meet a clean energy quota.

"Families are seeing the impact of the war in Iran every time they fill up their gas tank, place an order for heating oil or open their electric bill," Healey said, adding the state will "use every tool we have to get people relief."

Debate day on Thursday brought Healey on stage with challenger Mike Minogue for their first live television showdown. The governor name-dropped President Donald Trump more than 30 times. Healey ripped his tariffs, wars and federal funding cuts for "driving up the cost of everything" and rebuked Minogue for writing Trump a "million-dollar check."

Minogue knocked Healey's record on job growth and spending, and egged her on by urging her to opt Massachusetts into a federal scholarship tax credit, asking the governor, "Why would you not take the free money? Is it because it's coming from D.C.?" Healey said she's still reviewing the "education freedom" credit baked into the One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

The Massachusetts Council of Nonprofits is pushing for "strong support," with director Jim Klocke framing the credit as a "great mechanism for expanding educational services" and bringing new federal funding to the state. Jessica Tang, president of the Massachusetts branch of the American Federation of Teachers, thinks nonprofits might have been "misled" about the credit's impact, which she maintains will overwhelmingly benefit private schools.

On WBZ-TV, Minogue and Healey also tussled over federal immigration enforcement, the Springfield courthouse redevelopment project, municipal finances and Proposition 2 ½. The former medical device executive said he wants to stop government overspending, reduce taxes and double the state auditor's budget.

Auditor Diana DiZoglio, whose quest to probe the Legislature under a 2024 voter law is tied up in court, says she'd "absolutely" consider pursuing legal action if Beacon Hill passes a law that infringes on a public records ballot question. Should Question 1 pass and lawmakers proceed with the narrower public records framework they are

considering, DiZoglio said Massachusetts could face a "constitutional crisis." The Massachusetts Fiscal Alliance is also eyeing litigation.

Danielle Allen, of the Coalition for Healthy Democracy that's behind the all-party primaries ballot measure, was asked in a debate Tuesday why voters should even support Question 3. GBH co-host Jim Braude said lawmakers could "undo" the question they dislike but is now endorsed by former Republican Gov. Charlie Baker and former Democratic Gov. Deval Patrick.

Allen replied by invoking the Declaration of Independence and the list of grievances against King George III, saying, "There will be a riotous cry of outrage if the Legislature chooses to overturn the will of the voters."

A different kind of demonstration is planned at Brigham and Women's Hospital next week. Nearly 4,000 nurses are poised to go on strike indefinitely in pursuit of wage and insurance goals and limits on the use of temporary travel nurses. Mass General Brigham and nurses returned to the bargaining table Thursday but did not reach an agreement, the parties said. Another negotiation session is scheduled for Saturday morning, MGB spokesperson Jessica Pastore said.

During the potential strike, Pastore has the hospital "will remain open and ready to provide safe, high-quality care to every patient who depends on us."

Nurses at St. Vincent Hospital in Worcester went on strike for 301 days, before voting on a new contract in January 2022 that included staffing improvements, workplace safety protections and wage increases.

The Massachusetts Nurses Association, which represents the Brigham nurses, said MGB "stopped making meaningful movement and ultimately refused to continue discussions, leaving a deal out of reach despite nurses' substantial compromises." Katie Nicoloro, a NICU nurse and union rep, warned that MGB is thrusting Boston into a "healthcare crisis" as she questioned how patients will be able to access care amid the disruptions.

"It's something that I think government officials really need to be looking at very, very closely," Nicoloro told the News Service.

Pam Linzer, the Brigham's associate chief nursing officer, said the hospital plans to use the playbook it developed from the July work stoppage to ensure continuity of care for patients. The hospital is expected to bring in around 1,600 to 2,000 temporary nurses, many of whom filled in this summer.

"We've got this," Linzer said during a virtual briefing Friday afternoon. "I have no concern for the public, if you're watching this or hearing this. We will take the best care of you, like we do every single day."

Explosive healthcare spending continues to be a focal point for state officials. A new study based on claims data from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts zeroes in on key drivers — heightened use of services and more intense coding patterns affected by artificial intelligence — while taking away the onus on price growth, which historically was to blame.

"The data we looked at suggests that the way hospitals record and label patient care -

a process now often guided by AI and new technology - is a material driver of these rising costs," said Michael Guerriere, study co-author and Blue Cross Blue Shield chief actuary.

Michael Chernew, another co-author and Harvard Medical School professor, said AI has the potential to yield healthcare savings depending on how the technology is harnessed for incentives. At a MASSterList/State House News Service event Thursday, Chernew said an AI diagnostic tool for coronary artery disease management did not save money because it drove up the use of imaging.

SONG OF THE WEEK: Healey made home heating assistance benefits "hot to go" for Bay State households, just as Secretary of State Bill Galvin's office shipped out more than 600,000 mail-in ballots.

CORRECTION: This article was updated to include the Healey administration's explanation for how the governor's utility bill relief announced Monday will be funded. The governor's office said Monday that the plan's costs will be covered with money from alternative compliance payments that electricity suppliers make to the state when they do not meet a clean energy quota.

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Nurses postpone major strike, plan vote on hospital's "final offer'
Hospital reports 'important milestone' after 13 hours of talks on Saturday
Alison Kuznitz

BOSTON, Oct. 11, 2026.....Brigham and Women's Hospital nurses have postponed their indefinite strike and will vote on a contract deal with Mass General Brigham that leaves out a key demand, their union announced late Saturday night.

The Massachusetts Nurses Association, which represents the 4,000 Brigham nurses who were planning to walk off the job Wednesday morning, accused MGB management of "refusing to provide cost of living wage increases, a strategy we believe is intended to break our union, putting patients and the community at risk."

"As a democratic organization, given the complexity of the agreement and the impact of a potential strike on our nurses and the community, the Brigham Nurses' MNA Committee has decided to postpone the strike to allow the 4,000 Brigham nurses to vote on this offer," the union said in a statement. "Brigham nurses will decide our next steps."

MNA spokesperson Joe Markman said the date for the contract vote is not scheduled yet but will "likely" happen in two weeks. The union needs to secure space for the in-person vote, he said.

Beyond cost-of-living increases, the nurses say they are also seeking affordable health insurance and limits on the use of temporary travel nurses. MGB and the nurses are embroiled in a monthslong contract logjam, and tensions flared in July as the nurses went on a one-day strike that turned into a five-day work stoppage. The nurses in late September overwhelmingly voted to authorize an indefinite strike as the impasse continued.

The MNA said nurses offered multiple compromises during hours of private talks

Thursday, though both parties declared they could not resolve the stalemate. Nurses and MGB returned to the bargaining table on Saturday morning.

"During our 27th bargaining session with the MNA, the hospital made significant movement on several of the union's priorities and presented its last, best and final offer in an effort to reach agreement," MGB spokesperson Jessica Pastore said in a statement just before midnight. "The hospital believes its final proposal reflects the value our nurses bring to patient care while balancing our responsibility to patients, our workforce, and the long-term strength of the hospital. We are thankful the MNA has pulled its indefinite strike notice and will allow its members to vote on the hospital's final offer."

As they prepared for the possibility of an indefinite strike, MGB leaders had contingency plans in place to maintain continuity of care and keep the hospital open. The hospital anticipated bringing on 1,600 to 2,000 temporary replacement nurses, with many already filling roles at the Brigham during the July strike.

In a memo, Brigham and Women's Hospital senior vice president of patient care services and chief nursing officer Julia Mason said Saturday's negotiating session lasted 13 hours.

The contract would be in place through Sept. 30, 2028, according to Mason, and ensure that "all nurses would receive an increase to their base salary for both years of the contract." The offer "adds an employee contribution of 2.5% (approximately $10 per week) only for nurses hired into 40-hour positions after ratification who elect individual coverage in the post-tax plan. There would be no increase to the employee premium share for nurses who currently are regularly scheduled for 40 hours while they remain in that position, nor would there be an increase to the employee premium share for any nurse enrolled in the post-tax plan."

"We made every effort to find common ground and narrow the remaining differences," Mason wrote. "We are encouraged that our nurses will now have the opportunity to review and vote on the hospital's final offer."

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Advances - A look at the week of Oct. 11, 2026
State House News Service

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, Oct. 9, 2026.....Most legislators are on a glide path to reelection in Massachusetts and don't have much to do in terms of campaigning. They also have not done much in terms of legislative work since the General Court embarked on a summer recess July 31. With short, twice-weekly informal sessions since then, and having concluded most of the committee work, the allegedly full-time Legislature has behaved more like a part-time Legislature during August and September. The pattern has continued into October and appears likely to bleed deeper into fall and beyond the elections. House and Senate Democrats assigned to negotiate final details of 12 major bills remain deadlocked in their private conference committees. The lack of breakthroughs on bills that lawmakers themselves identified as essential means legislators so far have not given Gov. Maura Healey some of the legislative wins she's looking for, nor have they been able to show voters that they are able to bridge differences and deliver on economic development, energy affordability, higher education, public records access and environmental initiatives, among scores

of other policy plans. Lawmakers also have yet to begin advancing a perennial spending bill to close the books on last fiscal year, which ended June 30. The pre-election policymaking window is winding down in part because the focus on voting and the elections is cresting. U.S. Sen. Ed Markey faces Republican challenger John Deaton in a Tuesday night debate, and Gov. Maura Healey and Republican Mike Minogue face off Thursday night for the second time in a week. In between, it looks like the election calendar will be colored by a labor action as thousands of nurses at Brigham and Women's Hospital are prepared to launch an indefinite strike Wednesday. On Saturday, Oct. 17, early voting begins across the state and more voters join those who are mailing their ballots in and making their final choices far in advance of Election Day on Nov. 3. The last day to register to vote in this year's elections is Saturday, Oct. 24.

Saturday, Oct. 10, 2026

SPILKA IN FRAMINGHAM: Senate President Spilka delivers remarks at a dedication ceremony for Nick Paganella Corner. (Saturday, Oct. 10, 10 a.m., Framingham Common)

WARREN IN MICHIGAN: U.S. Sen. Warren campaigns in Michigan with Abdul El-Sayed at three stops on his "Shouldn't Be This Hard" town hall tour. El-Sayed, the Democratic nominee for the seat held by retiring U.S. Sen. Gary Peters, faces Republican Mike Rogers in a race that could be pivotal as Democrats and Republicans wrestle for control of the U.S. Senate. Exact locations are provided upon RSVP, and media must request press credentials. (Saturday, Oct. 10, 10:30 a.m., Cadillac, Mich. | Cadillac Credentials; 1:30 p.m., Traverse City, Mich. | Traverse City Credentials; 7 p.m., Oceana, Mich. | Oceana Credentials)
Sunday, Oct. 11, 2026

REPORTERS ON KELLER: MASSterList Editor Katie Lannan and Boston Globe political reporter Samantha Gross join political analyst Jon Keller for his weekly talk segment "Keller at Large" to analyze the debate between Gov. Maura Healey and GOP challenger Mike Minogue, preview the U.S. Senate debate between Ed Markey and GOP challenger John Deaton, and discuss candidate debate trends. (Sunday, 8:30 a.m., WBZ-TV)

MINOGUE ON NBC: Republican candidate for governor Mike Minogue joins NBC 10 reporter Matt Prichard for his weekly "@ Issue" political talk show. (Sunday, 9:30 a.m., NBC10-TV)

JONES ON THE RECORD: Republican candidate for the 6th Congressional District Micah Jones joins WCVB's weekly political talk show "On the Record." (Sunday, 11 a.m., WCVB-TV)

HONK FESTIVAL MARCH: Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocates Coalition and other statewide advocates march from Davis Square in Somerville to Harvard Square in Cambridge as part of the annual HONK! Festival, an activist street band festival. (Sunday, 11 a.m., Davis Square, Somerville | Register)

Monday, Oct. 12, 2026

GALVIN AT TOPSFIELD FAIR: Secretary of State William Galvin visits the Topsfield Fair to promote voter registration as well as mail-in and early voting. (Monday, 11

a.m., Secretary of the Commonwealth's booth, Topsfield Fairgrounds, 207 Boston St., Topsfield)

QUESTION 8 DEBATE: "Boston Public Radio" hosts a debate about Question 8, the ballot measure that would repeal the legalization for retail sales of recreational marijuana. Stop the Repeal campaign Chair Ryan Dominguez and Coalition for a Healthy Massachusetts's Stephen Kronberg debate. (Monday, 11 a.m. | GBH 88.7 FM | Livestream)

DEATON INTERVIEW: GBH Radio has Republican candidate for U.S. Senate John Deaton on air for an interview, ahead of his debate against U.S. Sen. Ed Markey the next day. (Monday, 12:30 p.m. | GBH 88.7 FM | Livestream)

COLUMBUS DAY: Massachusetts observes Columbus Day on the second Monday of October. State, county, and municipal offices are closed. More than 20 municipalities across Massachusetts refer to the day as Indigenous People's Day, according to the Mass. Center for Native American Awareness. (Monday)

Tuesday, Oct. 13, 2026

DPU TRANSPORTATION OVERSIGHT: Transportation Oversight Division of the Department of Public Utilities holds hearings on applications for carrier certification. The division regulates the rates and practices of carriers used to transport passengers, buses, towing companies and more. (Tuesday, 9 a.m., One South Station, 3rd floor, Boston | More Info and Access

PODIATRY BOARD: Board of Registration in Podiatry meets virtually. Agenda includes board elections and 2027 meeting dates. (Tuesday, 10 a.m. | Agenda and Access)

LOGAN REMOTE TERMINAL: Massport and elected officials celebrate the groundbreaking of a new remote terminal and two multilevel parking garages at the Braintree Logan Express site. The Logan Airport Remote Terminal at Braintree will be Massport's second remote location, following a pilot in Framingham. Eligible passengers can check luggage and clear TSA security off-site before boarding a locked bus directly to the post-security side at Logan Airport. Massport CEO Rich Davey, Congressman Lynch, Transportation Secretary and MBTA General Manager Eng, Sen. Driscoll, Rep. Cusack and Braintree Mayor Erin Joyce plan to attend. (Tuesday, 10:30 a.m., Braintree Logan Express, 262 Forbes Rd., Braintree)

CAPITAL PROGRAMS COMMITTEE: MassDOT Board of Directors Capital Programs Committee holds a meeting. (Tuesday, 10:30 a.m. | More Info and Access | Agenda)

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR DEBATE: Democrat Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll and GOP challenger Shawn Oliver debate. (Tuesday, 11 a.m., GBH Boston Public Library Studio, 700 Boylston Street, Boston | GBH 88.7 FM | Livestream)

SENATE: Senate meets. (Tuesday, 11 a.m., Senate Chamber)

HOUSE: House meets in an informal session. (Tuesday, 11 a.m., House Chamber)

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE: Restorative Justice Advisory Committee of the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security holds a remote

meeting. Agenda includes 2026 goals and objectives and a discussion about the 2026 annual report. (Tuesday, 11 a.m. | More Info and Access)

QUESTION 9 ROUNDTABLE: Attorney General Andrea Campbell and Middlesex District Attorney Marian Ryan join Yes on 9 For a Safe Massachusetts, the campaign to keep the state's 2024 gun law on the books, for a roundtable discussion on gun violence and the Nov. 3 ballot question. A yes vote on Question 9 preserves the 159-section law, which created stronger protections against ghost guns, outlawed machine gun conversion devices, and established a public gun data dashboard. Ruth Zakarin, chair of the campaign, and community leaders and advocates also participate. The No on 9 campaign says the law features "sweeping mandates that turn law-abiding citizens into criminals overnight and force honest citizens to reapply for rights they've held for decades to comply with confusing, burdensome rules that violate due process and privacy." Media may RSVP to harry@ninetywest.com. (Tuesday, 11:30 a.m., UTEC, 17 Warren Street, Lowell)

DEATON DEBATE DAY UPDATE: U.S. Senate candidate John Deaton holds a virtual lunchtime call with supporters ahead of his debate with Democrat Ed Markey later in the day. Deaton plans to discuss how his campaign's message is resonating and what to expect on the debate stage. (Tuesday, 12 p.m., Zoom)

PCA QUALITY WORKFORCE COUNCIL: Personal Care Attendant Quality Workforce Council meets virtually. Agenda includes a MassHealth update and an executive director's report. (Tuesday, 1:30 p.m. | More Info and Access)

MASSHOUSING BOARD: MassHousing board meets remotely. The agenda includes a report from CEO Chrystal Kornegay and a vote approving an annual contribution to the Opportunity Fund as well as "other deposits." The agenda also shows that MassHousing and two of its subsidiaries - Center for Community Recovery Innovations and Property Acquisition and Disposition Corporation - will hold their annual meetings.(Tuesday, 2 p.m. | Access and More Info)

SENATE DEBATE: Democrat Ed Markey and Republican John Deaton meet on the debate stage, three weeks before voters will send one of them to the U.S. Senate for the next six years. Markey has been in the Senate since 2013 and before that had been elected to the U.S. House since 1976. Deaton, a lawyer who ran an unsuccessful campaign against U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren two years ago, is angling to unseat Markey and become the first Republican elected to Congress from Massachusetts since Scott Brown in 2010. Political analyst Jon Keller moderates. (Tuesday, 5:30 p.m., WBZ-TV, 1170 Soldiers Field Road, Boston)

BOARD OF ED: Board of Elementary and Secondary Education meets to discuss proposed regulations related to the literacy law Gov. Healey signed in June, which requires districts to adopt DESE-approved evidence-based reading curricula, mandates bi-annual reading screenings for K-3 students, and creates new professional training requirements for educators. (Tuesday, 6 p.m. | Livestream)

Q3 DEBATE: CommonWealth Beacon hosts a debate on Question 3, the ballot measure to establish all-party primaries. Representing the "Yes on 3" campaign will be Danielle Allen, chair of the Coalition for Healthy Democracy. Representing the "No on 3" campaign will be Jordan Berg Powers, chair of Voting Rights MA. If approved, the question would reshape elections and the roles of political parties in Massachusetts. It would replace the current system, in which Republicans and

Democrats have separate primary elections to select their nominees for the general election, to one where all candidates appear on a single ballot and the top two would advance, regardless of their party registration. Reporters Jennifer Smith and Chris Lisinski moderate. (Tuesday, 7 p.m., Room TC 103AB in the David Hartleb Technology Center, Northern Essex Community College, Haverhill | Livestream)

Wednesday, Oct. 14, 2026

BRIGHAM NURSE STRIKE: Nearly 4,000 Brigham and Women's Hospital nurses are slated to begin their open-ended strike after contract negotiations did not produce an agreement. Nurses, who are represented by the Massachusetts Nurses Association, and Mass General Brigham returned to the bargaining table on Thursday but could not overcome their differences. The nurses went on a one-day strike in July, which turned into a five-day work stoppage as the Brigham brought on temporary travel nurses to maintain continuity of care. The MNA accused the healthcare system Thursday of refusing to continue discussions, saying "MGB declined to meet Friday unless nurses agreed to their last proposal." The union said nurses offered up compromises in a bid to avert the strike, including reducing their wage proposal, increasing the proposed limit on temporary travel nurses and accepting an increased employee contribution for health insurance. The MNA is asking people to call Gov. Maura Healey and "urge her to demand MGB come back to the table in good faith." MGB spokesperson Jessica Pastore said the hospital's "highest priority" is patients. "As we prepare for the union's announced indefinite strike beginning October 14, Brigham and Women's Hospital will remain open and ready to provide safe, high-quality care to every patient who depends on us," Pastore said. (Wednesday, 7 a.m., 75 Francis St., Boston)

PUBLIC HEALTH COUNCIL: Public Health Council holds a virtual meeting. Agenda includes updates from Commissioner Goldstein and a vote on a determination of need for a request by Beth Israel Lahey Health "for a significant capital expenditure and a substantial change in service." Lahey Hospital and Medical Center in Burlington is seeking approval to construct a new inpatient unit with 36 new medical/surgical beds and eight observation beds, and construct one new cardiac catheterization/electrophysiology producer laboratory on the hospital's main campus. It also wants to acquire one new computed tomography unit for operation at the hospital's satellite location in Peabody. The proposed expenditure sits at $79.5 million, according to a document featuring determination of need projects before the Department of Public Health. The Council is also expected to consider regulations to implement a two-year-old law that directed the state to consider out-of-state issues when weighing a nursing home license, which the Healey administration announced on the heels of a media report that faulted the state's oversight of nursing home transactions. (Wednesday, 9 a.m. | Agenda and Access)

FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE: MassDOT Board of Directors Finance and Audit Committee holds a meeting. (Wednesday, 9:30 a.m. | More Info and Access)

PERAC: Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission's legislative subcommittee meets to discuss legislation to refile in the 2027-2028 session and a new bill for next session. (Wednesday, 10:30 a.m., PERAC, 10 Cabot Road, Suite 300, Medford | Virtual Access)

TROOPER HANNA MEMORIAL AWARDS: Executive Office of Public Safety and Security hosts the Trooper George L. Hannah Memorial Awards for Bravery

ceremony. Hannah was shot and killed during a traffic stop in Auburn in 1983. (Wednesday, 11 a.m., Great Hall)

MWRA BOARD: Massachusetts Water Resources Authority meets. The board will announce finalists for the executive director job. Interim Executive Director Stephen Estes-Smargiassi has helmed the quasi-public agency since longtime director Fred Laskey retired in May. (Wednesday, 11 a.m. | Virtual)

QUESTION 5 DEBATE: "Boston Public Radio" hosts a debate about Question 5, the ballot measure that would change the state tax revenue limit and potentially fuel more frequent taxpayer rebates. Supporter Chris Keohan from Taxpayers for an Affordable Massachusetts and opponent Phineas Baxandall from the Mass Budget & Policy Research Center debate. (Wednesday, 11 a.m., GBH Boston Public Library Studio, 700 Boylston St., Boston | GBH 88.7 FM | Livestream)

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE BRIEFING: Utility Contractors Association of New England has a briefing on the "practical and policy challenges facing Massachusetts water infrastructure." Jay Ash, president of the Massachusetts Competitive Partnership, moderates a panel with Lowell City Manager Tom Golden, Springfield Water and Sewer Commission Executive Director Josh Schimmel and CREDA Massachusetts President Tamara Small. (Wednesday, 12 p.m., Room 428)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON THE CENSUS: Senate Committee on the Census holds a public hearing on the U.S. Census Bureau's recent proposals to update questions for the 2030 census, including eliminating questions about race, ethnicity and sexual orientation, as well as excluding most non-citizens from apportionment counts. The bureau also wants to modify the definition of a person's "usual residence," which could affect how college students and snowbirds are counted. Another change would update how people living in group quarters, such as dorms and nursing homes, are counted. The hearing will feature testimony and presentation from experts and public officials. KFF says excluding immigrants from apportionment counts could lead to decreased federal funding, including for Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program. (Wednesday, 1 p.m. Room A-1 | Agenda and Livestream)

BARNSTABLE PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS: MassDOT holds a public hearing to present the proposal to create a compliant sidewalk along the Route 6A corridor from the Route 132 intersection with Route 6A to Old Jail Lane in Barnstable. (Wednesday, 5 p.m., Mary Pat Flynn Conference Room in the Barnstable County Complex, 3195 Main St., Barnstable | More Info and Recording)

STERLING INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS: MassDOT holds a virtual public hearing about the proposal to construct a "one-lane, peanut-shaped roundabout" with bicycle accommodation, ADA-compliant pedestrian facilities and new crosswalks in Sterling. (Wednesday, 6 p.m. | More Info and Register)

BALLOT QUESTIONS: ECCO holds an election-season organizing meeting for congregations and community members to discuss four statewide ballot questions. The group's cross-ECCO elections team opposes Question 5 to revise the state's tax cap formula and supports Question 7 dealing with housing construction, Question 4 allowing people to register and vote on Election Day; and Question 2 which would give state legal services employees the right to unionize. Organizers also plan to prepare attendees for action ahead of Election Day and to "mobilize quickly if we're needed to help protect the election results." (Wednesday, 6:30 p.m., First Baptist

Church, 221 Cabot Street, Beverly)

Thursday, Oct. 15, 2026

MTF ON FISCAL OUTLOOK: Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation President Doug Howgate discusses the state's fiscal outlook, including budget priorities, revenue trends and economic forces affecting Massachusetts, at a Springfield Regional Chamber breakfast forum. Howgate is one of the outside analysts Beacon Hill leaders most often look to for thoughts on the economy and their budgeting moves. Tickets cost $40 for chamber members and $50 for non-members. (Thursday, 8 a.m., Marriott Springfield Downtown, Grand Ballroom, 2 Boland Way, Springfield | More Info and Register)

MBTA AUDIT AND FINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE: MBTA Audit and Finance Committee holds a hybrid meeting. (Thursday, 9 a.m., State Transportation Building, 2nd Floor, 10 Park Plaza, Boston | More Info)

TRAHAN AT BOSTON CHAMBER: Congresswoman Lori Trahan speaks during a Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce government affairs forum. After her keynote, Trahan participates in a fireside chat with chamber CEO Jim Rooney. In a recent Beacon Hill appearance, Trahan promoted her FRONTIER Act, which would create a national, risk-based framework for frontier AI developers, mandate catastrophic risk transparency and reporting, and incorporate a "federal kill switch" if the government needs to step in to address an imminent catastrophic risk. (Thursday, 9:45 a.m., Westin Copley Plaza, 10 Huntington Ave., Boston | Register)

CELEBRATION FOR $10 BILLION IN WATER LOANS: Treasurer Deb Goldberg's office, Massachusetts Clean Water Trust and Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection hold a celebration for $10 billion in loans the agencies have partnered to issue to cities and towns for water infrastructure projects. Treasurer Goldberg attends. (Thursday, 10 a.m., Worcester City Hall at 455 Main St., Worcester)

MBTA PLANNING, WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE: MBTA Planning, Workforce Development and Compensation Subcommittee hosts a hybrid meeting. (Thursday, 10 a.m., State Transportation Building, 2nd Floor, 10 Park Plaza, Boston | More Info)

CLEAN ENERGY CENTER: Massachusetts Clean Energy Center's board of directors holds a Compensation and Personnel Committee meeting. Agenda items include CEO compensation and proposed fiscal 2027 metrics. For remote access, contact mbeadle@masscec.com. (Thursday, 10 a.m., 294 Washington St., Suite 1150, Boston | More Info)

HOUSE: House meets in an informal session. (Thursday, 11 a.m., House Chamber)

SENATE: Senate meets in an informal session. (Thursday, 11 a.m., Senate Chamber)

MBTA SAFETY, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT SUBCOMMITTEE: MBTA Safety, Health and Environment Subcommittee holds a hybrid meeting. (Thursday, 11 a.m., State Transportation Building, 2nd Floor, 10 Park Plaza, Boston | More Info)

QUESTION 7 DEBATE: "Boston Public Radio" hosts a debate about Question 7, the

ballot measure that aims to ease local zoning restrictions by enabling single-family homes to be built on lots that are at least 5,000 square feet with at least 50 feet of street frontage, and have access to public sewer and water services. Supporter Andrew Mikula of the Legalize Starter Homes campaign and opponent Adam Chapdelaine from the Massachusetts Municipal Association debate. (Thursday, 11 a.m. | GBH 88.7 FM | Livestream)

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES TECHNICAL SESSION: Department of Public Utilities holds a hybrid technical session "to discuss matters related to its investigation into gas and electric delivery charges and bill redesign," per the DPU. Agenda includes discussion about topics including ratepayers impacts, net metering and next steps. The session is a chance for the DPU to "hear stakeholders' recommendations" and for them to discuss and ask questions. (Thursday, 11 a.m., One South Station, 3rd Floor, Boston | Agenda and Access)

ENERGY EFFICIENCY ADVISORY COUNCIL: Energy Efficiency Advisory Council holds a workshop meeting about its next three-year plan, which will run from October 2028 through 2030. (Thursday, 12:30 p.m. | More Info and Register)

AMGEN 25TH ANNIVERSARY: Sen. DiDomenico, Rep. Ryan, Cambridge Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui, Cambridge City Manager Yi-An Huang and Kendall Square Association Executive Director Beth O'Neill Maloney speak as Amgen Massachusetts marks 25 years at its Kendall Square site. Amgen Massachusetts Site Head Margaret Faul delivers welcome remarks, past site heads take part in a panel discussion, and Amgen Chairman and CEO Bob Bradway appears in a video message. The speaking program is followed by a reception at which Faul and other company officials will be available to the media. (Thursday, 1 p.m., Amgen Massachusetts, 360 Binney St., Cambridge)

EAST LONGMEADOW HIGH SCHOOL: East Longmeadow officials hold a ribbon-cutting ceremony for a new East Longmeadow High School. Treasurer Goldberg attends. (Thursday, 3 p.m., 180 Maple St., East Longmeadow)

REHABILITATION COUNCIL: Membership Committee of the Massachusetts State Rehabilitation Council holds a virtual meeting. (Thursday, 4:15 p.m. | Agenda and Access)

STUDENT ADVISORY COUNCIL: Department of Higher Education's Student Advisory Council meets. (Thursday, 4:30 p.m. | More Info)

WOMEN, POWER AND DEMOCRACY: Attorney General Campbell joins Christine Monska, executive director of Women's Fund SouthCoast and chair of the Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women, for a fireside conversation at the fund's "Women, Power, and the Future of Democracy" event in New Bedford. Sen. Edwards participates in a panel discussion alongside reproductive justice activist and author Loretta Ross, former National Immigration Law Center head Marielena Hincapié, and SouthCoast Community Foundation President and CEO Melanie Edwards-Tavares. Tickets range from $25 to $180. (Thursday, 5 p.m., Zeiterion, 684 Purchase St., New Bedford | More Info and Tickets)

KNOX TRAIL BRIDGE: Department of Conservation and Recreation presents plans to replace a suspension bridge in poor condition that spans the Farmington River in Otis. The pedestrian and snowmobile bridge connects Route 8 to snowmobile trails

on DCR land. It is part of the historic General Knox Trail, the 300-mile route Knox traveled to deliver key artillery to General George Washington from Fort Ticonderoga, N.Y., to Boston. DCR will review a concept design for a new trail bridge with year-round access for hikers, mountain bikers, snowmobilers, equestrians, and cross-country skiers, followed by a public comment period. Written comments are due Oct. 29. (Thursday, 6 p.m., Zoom)

HEALEY-MINOGUE DEBATE: WCVB Channel 5, WBUR and The Boston Globe host a one-hour debate between Gov. Maura Healey and GOP gubernatorial contender Mike Minogue. WCVB said this will be the final debate between Healey and Minogue before the Nov. 3 general election. Ed Harding, WCVB anchor and "On The Record" co-host, moderates. Panelists include "On The Record" co-host and political reporter Sharman Sacchetti, Boston Globe columnist Adrian Walker and WBUR's "Morning Edition" host Tiziana Dearing. The debate will be broadcast live on WCVB and WBUR 90.9 FM. It will also be livestreamed on WCVB, WBUR and The Boston Globe's websites as well as WCVB's mobile app and "Very Local Platform." El Planeta and Bay State Banner will also stream the debate. (Thursday, 8 p.m., WCVB Channel 5, 5 TV Place, Needham)

MASSPORT BOARD: Massachusetts Port Authority board meets. (Thursday, Time TBD | More Info)

Friday, Oct. 16, 2026

MMA LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST: Massachusetts Municipal Association holds legislative breakfast meeting. The meetings are meant to provide an opportunity for networking, an informal setting to discuss issues at the local and state levels and for members to get updates on pending bills. There will be breakfast meetings in both Great Barrington and Leicester. (Friday, 8:30 a.m., 334 Main St., Great Barrington and 40 Winslow Ave., Leicester | More Info)

PESTICIDE BOARD: Pesticide Board meets via Zoom. Agenda includes pesticide program and Pesticide Advisory Council updates. (Friday, 10 a.m. | More Info and Access)

CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL MIDWIVES: Executive Office of Health and Human Services holds a public hearing on the emergency adoption of regulations that create a new provider type for certified professional midwives. The changes also establish new codes for home delivery supply kits ($500 per pregnancy) and interim labor to support low-risk MassHealth members who plan to use home birth services. Aggregate MassHealth expenditures are expected to increase by $47,000 with the changes. (Friday, 10 a.m. | More Info and Access)

QUESTION 4 DEBATE: "Boston Public Radio" hosts a debate about Question 4, the ballot measure that would enable people to register to vote and then cast a ballot on Election Day. The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts' Celia Canavan and GOP candidate for attorney general Michael Walsh debate. (Friday, 11 a.m., GBH Boston Public Library Studio, 700 Boylston St., Boston | GBH 88.7 FM | Livestream)

MASSHEALTH MIDWIVES: MassHealth holds a public hearing on establishing a new provider type for certified professional midwives as a result of the 2024 maternal health law. The regulations deal with eligibility criteria for providers and MassHealth members, plus other administrative requirements. Health officials last

month began accepting applications for temporary CPM licensure. (Friday, 11 a.m. | More Info and Access)

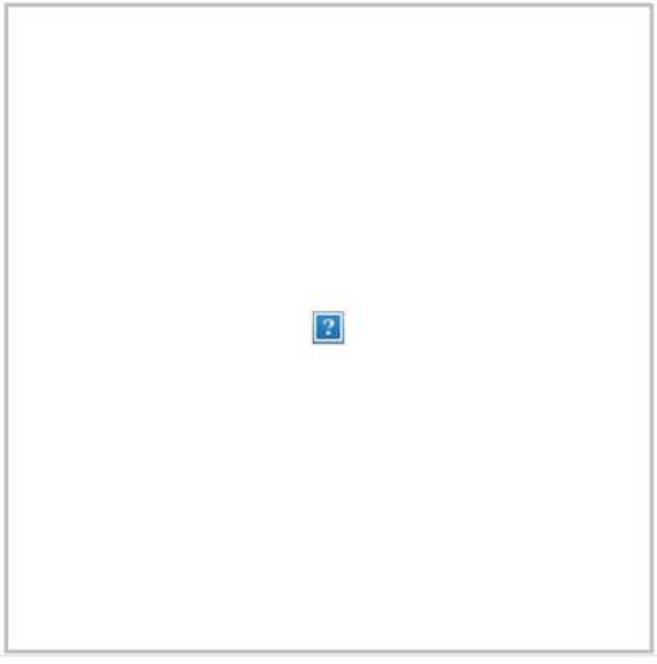
ADULT FOSTER CARE: Executive Office of Health and Human Services holds a remote public hearing on setting rates for certain adult foster care services. Officials say they want to reduce the reimbursement rate for intake and assessment services when handled by contracted entities, rather than adult foster care providers, to $100. Without that billing modifier, the service would be reimbursed at $266.62. The change is expected to save $1.27 million, officials say as they look to trim spending on long-term services and supports ahead of federal funding cuts. (Friday, 1 p.m. | More Info and Access)

ELECTRIC VEHICLE HEARING: Department of Public Utilities holds a virtual public hearing for comments on the electric vehicle infrastructure plan proposals submitted by Eversource, National Grid and Unitil. The strategic plans address the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Coordinating Council's biennial ten-year forecast of electric vehicle charging demand in the state, per DPU. The council's job is to assess and report on plans necessary to deploy EV charging infrastructure across Massachusetts. (Friday, 2 p.m. | More Info and Access)

Saturday, Oct. 17, 2026

EARLY VOTING: Early voting for the Nov. 3 state election begins. Every city and town will hold early voting hours the weekends of Oct. 17-18 and Oct. 24-25. Oct. 30 is the last day for early voting. (Saturday, Oct. 17 | Find your town's schedule)

NO KINGS BOSTON: On the first day of early voting, No Kings Boston forgoes its usual rally on Boston Common for events throughout the state focused on getting voters to participate and protecting elections. Activities include group walks and rides to voting sites, voter registration drives, "Know Your Rights" training and sessions for how to respond if your voting rights are threatened. (Saturday 10/17, Event times vary | More Info)



Questions?
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Daily Advances & SHNS Articles

October 9, 2026

Gov. Maura Healey

8:00.....Gives remarks at El Mundo Hispanic Heritage Month Breakfast, with Lt. Gov. Driscoll.....Boston Park Plaza 50 Park Plaza, Boston

Daily Events

7:45.....Boston Mayor Wu delivers remarks at the El Mundo Boston Hispanic Heritage Breakfast.....Hilton Boston Park Plaza, 50 Park Plaza, Boston

9:00.....Supreme Judicial Court hears arguments in four cases, including whether the Superior Court erred in requiring an insurer to pay over $50 million in restitution and over $115 million in civil penalties.....John Adams Courthouse, Room 1, 1 Pemberton Square, Boston | More Info and Livestream

11:00.....Boston Mayor Michelle Wu joins chief of Boston EMS James Hooley and Boston's Commissioner of Public Health Bisola Ojikutu for a graduation ceremony for 22 emergency medical technicians who completed the six-month Boston EMS Recruit Academy. Also, 12 Boston EMS workers will be recognized for their promotions.....The Great Hall at Faneuil Hall, 1 Faneuil Hall Square, Boston

12:30.....Lt. Gov. Driscoll gives the keynote address at the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce Game Changers Business Conference and Expo.....Mechanics Hall, 321Main St, Worcester

5:00.....Mayor Wu delivers remarks at City of Boston's annual Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration.....City Hall Plaza, 1 City Hall Sq., Boston

The Legislature

.....No sessions today. The next sessions are Tuesday at 11 a.m.....

Guv's record, Trump's impact on stage in Healey-Minogue debate
Minogue says affordability worsened under Healey, guv ties Minogue to Trump and his impact on rising costs
Sam Drysdale

BOSTON, Oct. 8, 2026.....During the first head-to-head showdown between Gov. Maura Healey and Republican challenger Mike Minogue Thursday, affordability and President Donald Trump took center stage.

Healey, who is running for her second term, repeatedly tied Minogue to Trump and argued that the president's tariffs, war and cuts to federal programs are making life more expensive in Massachusetts. Minogue argued that Healey has had four years, a Democratic Legislature and record-high budgets to address the state's high costs — and has fallen short.

Facing off in a WBZ-TV studio with moderator Jon Keller, the candidates returned over and over to a central question: whether Massachusetts' affordability problems are primarily the result of decisions made on Beacon Hill or in Washington.

Healey invoked Trump over 30 times during the debate, beginning about two minutes and 40 seconds into the event. She argued that her administration has cut taxes, expanded housing, capped health care costs and made community college free, while Trump's policies are pushing prices higher.

"Donald Trump is driving up the cost of everything. And by the way, we have 100,000 homes coming online because I filed and signed the strongest housing law in the country," Healey said.

Minogue responded that the governor was diverting blame.

"It is what can we do, not who do we blame," Minogue said.

A supporter for Republican gubernatorial candidate Mike Minogue chants "Let's go Mike" to a crowd of both supporters and opponents outside of WBZ's headquarters in Boston, where Minogue debates Gov. Maura Healey on Thursday, Oct. 8, 2026.

"I want to make sure that we focus on stopping overspending, which makes overtaxing happen, and then over-regulating," Minogue said. "We already have eight taxes. Those taxes continue to go up."

He pointed to the state's permitting, energy, healthcare and housing costs, and said that if elected his administration would reduce taxes and regulations while pursuing manufacturing and innovation.

Minogue also blamed Healey for the Steward Health Care crisis, saying she had allowed hospitals to close. Healey did not directly respond to the Steward accusation, instead challenging his broader characterization of the state's healthcare system and returning to Trump's impact on federal health care funding.

"My opponent is somebody who wrote a million-dollar check to Donald Trump," Healey said. "He saw what Donald Trump did in his first term and said, 'I want more of that.' He invited J.D. Vance to his house."

One of the debate's most sustained policy clashes came over education and a federal scholarship tax credit that Minogue said could generate $1.7 billion for educational grants.

"A federal tax credit is not an education plan, Mike," Healey said.

"It is," Minogue replied.

Minogue pressed Healey to opt into the program, arguing that parents could use the money for tutoring, books, transportation and special education.

"Why would you not take the free money? Is it because it's coming from D.C.?" Minogue said.

Healey said she would review the program rather than accept the Trump administration's guidance at face value.

"What I said is I've got to look at it, and I'm not just going to take Trump's word for it," Healey said.

Minogue accused her of putting partisan politics ahead of students.

"This is an example where Maura Healey hates the other party more than she cares about our kids," he said.

Healey rejected that charge — "I don't actually hate anyone" — and returned to her broader argument that Massachusetts needs to protect public education and residents from Trump's policies.

Union leaders supported Gov. Maura Healey outside of her first debate with Republican gubernatorial candidate Mike Minogue at WBZ's studios in Boston on Thursday, Oct. 8, 2026.

The candidates also disagreed over municipal finances and Proposition 2½. Minogue proposed returning a larger share of state money to cities and towns rather than forcing them to rely on property tax increases.

"My solution, real quick, is instead of towns keeping 26% of their money, which is what it is today, they should get 35 to 40% back," Minogue said.

They later clashed over the state's proposed Springfield courthouse, with Minogue arguing that the project represented excessive spending and poor oversight.

"Giving political insiders $2 billion to build a courthouse in Springfield is not integrity," Minogue said, arguing that "the whole thing should be thrown out."

Healey disputed the price tag and defended the procurement process.

"I don't know, Mike, how much time you spent in Springfield, but there was a sick building. People were getting sick. They were dying of diseases. And I made a commitment as governor that I was going to make sure that those people in Springfield got a new courthouse," Healey said. "And by the way, it's not $2 billion to construct the courthouse. It's actually $463 million to construct that."

She said a judge had reviewed the procurement and declined to pause the project, and that the arrangement would save taxpayers money and accelerate construction.

Minogue pressed her on why taxpayers would ultimately pay $2 billion over the life of the agreement.

"Sounds like a Ponzi scheme. It sounds like a Ponzi scheme that it's a good deal to spend $2 billion on a courthouse," Minogue said. "It isn't common sense."

Healey, visibly frustrated, said, "People can fault me for a lot of things that I did, Mike. Okay, but I can tell you this: I was working every day for them. I prosecuted fraud. I prosecuted corruption. I went after scam artists. I held big companies accountable. I've done that throughout my career."

Minogue thanked her for doing that. Healey said, "I don't know why you're thanking me." and Minogue replied, "For doing that. I appreciate that."

"Okay then do me the decency of not questioning my integrity," Healey said.

On housing, the candidates found some common ground on Question 7, the ballot question aimed at easing local zoning restrictions and allowing more single-family homes.

"I'm absolutely for it. We need more homes," Healey said.

A supporter of independent candidate for governor Andrea James holds a sign outside of the first gubernatorial debate of 2026, between Gov. Maura Healey and Republican challenger Mike Minogue. James was not asked to participate.

Minogue also backed it, but argued it would not solve the underlying cost problem without changes to building requirements and permitting.

"I'm for it, but it doesn't fix the problem," Minogue said. "The permitting takes too long."

They also agreed on the need for an audit of the state Legislature, though they disputed Healey's record on the issue.
Healey said Minogue was wrong to claim she opposed the audit.

"You know full well I supported the audit. I voted for it along with 72% of the people in Massachusetts, and I have been audited hundreds of times," Healey said.

Minogue countered that Healey's support had not translated into action.

"You did not support it. You don't even communicate and talk to the state auditor," Minogue said. "You need to lead. You need to push on the Legislature. You didn't do any of that, and you let the auditor hang out and dry."

Minogue said he would more than double the state auditor's budget, from $26 million to $52 million, and conduct a financial audit of the state's more than $70 billion budget.

Disagreement over Trump also sharpened in the second half, particularly on

immigration. Healey said immigrants in Massachusetts were living in fear because of federal immigration enforcement and accused Minogue of siding with ICE.

"I agree with Governor Healey. No kid should be worried about going to school. Nobody should be worried about going to the hospital. 100% agree with you on that," Minogue said.

But he said his priority would be targeting violent criminals and drug dealers while lowering the political temperature.

"My position is simple: I am anti-violent criminal and drug dealer," Minogue said. "What I'm going to do is be the leader. I'm going to lower the temperature."

Healey challenged him to take that argument to the president.

"Well, then call Trump and tell him to take ICE home," Healey said.

Minogue maintained that the governor should focus on state government rather than Washington.

"I'm not running for president or senator. I'm running for the governor, and the governor cares about Massachusetts," he said.

He later said, "It really doesn't matter who the president is. We are last in Massachusetts, so you own that."

Healey rejected that premise.

"Donald Trump is president for the next two years, and that's why who your governor is matters more than ever," she said.

The candidates ended where they began: Minogue promising to cut taxes, reduce regulation and grow jobs, and Healey arguing that Massachusetts needs a governor prepared to shield residents from Trump's policies while continuing to tackle state problems. Minogue knocked Healey's track record on job growth during her four-year term.

"I have a plan to lower costs and grow jobs," Minogue said. "I'm going to do it with accountability of the audit, which you did not support.

I'm going to do it by getting rid of and minimizing the eight taxes with the money we save."

Minogue said Massachusetts was "last in that nation in private job growth. Last in the nation since Governor Healey took over. That's negative growth. I created more jobs at Abiomed than Governor Healey indirectly." Healey countered by drawing a connection between Minogue and Trump and adding, "My opponent is somebody who supports Donald Trump's agenda, which has been raising costs." She also said, "My opponent just said a number of things that just aren't accurate."

Healey argued that Minogue's relationship with Trump made the president relevant to the governor's race.

"The best thing that Mike Minogue could do to lower costs in this state is to call his friend Donald Trump or J.D. Vance, who he supported, who he helped elect, who he gave a million dollars to, and say, 'End this war, cut it out with the tariffs,'" Healey said.

After the debate, Healey defended her frequent references to Trump when reporters asked whether she had mentioned him too many times.
"Look, Trump is on the ballot this election, and there's a clear choice in this election," Healey said.

Healey also said she was personally offended by Minogue's questioning of her integrity during the courthouse exchange.

"One thing that I really take issue with is that he was questioning my integrity, and that's something that I just was personally offended by," she said.

Asked about Minogue thanking her during the debate, she initially said she did not recall the exchange. When a reporter explained that he had thanked her for her work prosecuting fraud and corruption, Healey responded: "Well that's good, he's a constituent too."

Minogue did not take questions from reporters after the debate, pushing through a scrum of journalists gathered outside the event.

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Experts detail pain points of bending healthcare cost curve
Mahaniah: 'It's clear that we will not be able to afford what we had yesterday'
Alison Kuznitz

BOSTON, Oct. 8, 2026.....Top insurance executives and healthcare experts called Thursday for new payment incentives and a reimagining of where and how care is delivered to help mitigate the state's escalating affordability crisis.

Michael Chernew, a Harvard Medical School healthcare policy professor, stressed that price growth is not the main culprit behind ballooning healthcare spending that's straining Bay Staters' wallets across rising premiums and out-of-pocket costs. Drawing on a new study he co-authored about the 12% jump in spending growth at Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, Chernew instead pointed to the volume and intensity of services that patients are using.

"AI has enabled providers to code more advanced conditions," Chernew said at an event hosted by MASSterList and the State House News Service at the UMass Club. "They may be true — people may be sicker in some ways. But they're capturing more of those things."

Attorney General Andrea Campbell in May sued UnitedHealthcare Insurance Company for allegedly misclassifying the conditions of elderly members and defrauding MassHealth of at least $100 million. The suit claims that United "falsely manipulated" members' health evaluations to secure bigger payments. United called the AG's lawsuit "meritless."

Chernew referenced data in which patients were getting coded "much more for

postpartum anemia but they weren't getting any more transfusions." He also pointed to more intense, complex coding patterns at doctor's offices and emergency departments.

Investments across primary care and prevention are unlikely to slow growth in healthcare volume and intensity, Chernew said, as providers pour more money into treatments even as they seek to avoid costlier interventions in the long run. He offered a menu of strategies to rein in spending, including embracing narrower insurance networks, ramping up utilization management such as prior authorization requirements, imposing price caps, eliminating administrative barriers, engaging with patients and providers to deliver care in appropriate settings, and creating incentives in payment structures.

"I do think, by the way, AI will have the potential to save money if we put it into a system that has the right incentives to encourage it to save money," Chernew said.

Dr. Zirui Song of Massachusetts General Hospital discussed the mounting use of healthcare services — which he suggested might be "potentially inappropriate or at least curiously high" — compared to the prevalence of diseases. He pointed to the uptick in procedures, imaging, tests, durable medical equipment, behavioral health services and physician-administered drugs.

"There are many examples in those classic buckets of healthcare utilization where you might ask, 'Does the patient need this particular service at this particular time in this particular setting, and, of course, at this particular price?' " Song said. "A lot of the policy levers we talk about in slowing spending growth on the volume side has to do with fundamentally clinical appropriateness. It requires some judgment around clinical nuance to determine whether a particular service was appropriate and high-value for the patient and for society."

Massachusetts has not spent as "much time" delving into that arena compared to payment reform, Song said. There's been a surge in cardiac ablations in recent years, which Song said are effective at treating certain heart conditions but cost $50,000 on average per procedure.

"There are patients for whom the drug therapy, which is much cheaper, is perhaps better," Song said.

Sarah Iselin, CEO of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, acknowledged that the tools that insurers have to mitigate coding intensity and utilization — including prior authorization and denials — are "not popular."

"Sitting in a payer seat, we don't like these things either," Iselin said.

She encouraged policymakers to venture into the "next generation of payment reforms" and offer economic incentives to "create a reward for actually having care aligned with evidence-based clinical best practices."

Primary care reform legislation lodged in conference committee aims to move the sector away from the traditional fee-for-service structure and toward value-based payment models. Iselin argued specialists should also be included in a revamped payment incentive model.
"There isn't a roadmap for this, by the way, and so this is something that we will have

to do collaboratively between the providers in this market, the private payers in this market, ideally in coordination and partnership with state governments," said Iselin, who led the former state Division of Health Care Finance and Policy in 2008 and 2009.

As healthcare players navigate options to control costs and juggle tradeoffs, Health and Human Services Secretary Kiame Mahaniah said the state can be involved in brokering a "sort of greater grand bargain."

"So certain parts of the the menu, obviously, if you're going to do reference pricing or cap pricing or something again, obviously you may need, the state should be involved," he said, though he sounded wary of state officials deciding what constitutes "clinical effectiveness."

"It's going to take active collaboration, and I hate to say it, but active sacrifice in terms of people actually sacrificing things that are currently perhaps core to their business," Mahaniah said.

The secretary spoke about recalibrating people's expectations about what routine care they should expect against what the state can afford, while also considering the government's "moral imperative" to ensure residents can live with dignity.

"I think to me, it's clear that we will not be able to afford what we had yesterday," Mahaniah said. "I'm just looking at just Medicaid. What we had yesterday — yesterday, I mean metaphorically over the last few years — I don't think it's what we'll be able to afford tomorrow without dramatic changes."

Iselin said the state's healthcare cost growth benchmark is "incredibly important" and sends a signal to the market about what acceptable spending should entail. Spending regularly eclipses the benchmark, and critics say the target has not worked as intended to rein in costs. Iselin highlighted a similar law in California that has "much more teeth than ours."

To ease administrative hurdles, the Blue Cross Blue Shield official advocated for a new state law to expand information-sharing between providers and insurers.

"Right now, we have such inefficiency in the way we share information. Every health plan and every provider has to — think of it as like building pipes — has to build the pipes individually from each other," Iselin said.

In one example, Iselin said enhanced information flow could help hospital providers avoid duplicating tests and procedures their patients had done at non-affiliated facilities. Patient data does not need to be stored in a centralized database, though Iselin said policymakers would need to consider cybersecurity protections.

"Our barrier, honestly ... it's political will," Iselin said.

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Beth Israel Lahey Health names Shorett to succeed Tabb
Alison Kuznitz

A Beth Israel Lahey Health executive who helped create the healthcare system will

become its next leader in January.

Peter Shorett was named the next president and CEO following a national search, BILH's board of trustees announced Thursday. He was one of the architects of the 2019 merger between Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and Lahey Health.

Shorett has most recently worked as senior executive vice president and chief operating officer, a role in which he helped broker another major healthcare partnership between Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and Harvard Medical Faculty Physicians. The venture ends Dana-Farber's long-standing agreement with Mass General Brigham as it looks to build a 300-bed, freestanding hospital.

"The opportunity to lead the organization that I know and love — and that I helped bring into being — is one of the greatest privileges of my life," Shorett said in a statement. "At BILH, we have a remarkable legacy of care, innovation, and commitment to our communities. I look forward to working alongside our outstanding teams to sustain the values that are the hallmarks of our system, while driving the transformation that is needed for our next chapter."

Shorett will succeed Dr. Kevin Tabb, who has led BILH since its formation and announced in March his plans to step down. The system treats more than 2.1 million patients across Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire. It's also the region's second-largest employer, with 39,000 employees and 5,300 physicians.

Shorett previously was the director of healthcare consulting firm The Chartis Group. He earned his master's in public policy at the Harvard Kennedy School.

"It has been a pleasure to come to know Peter as a man whose prodigious intellect and operational capabilities are matched with the values of compassion and consistency," Dana-Farber CEO Dr. Benjamin Ebert said. "In everything he does, Peter strives for excellence, and I know that he will lead the system well in the next phase of our partnership."

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Safe driving law update would target motorists recording themselves
Policymakers aware of new ways that tech may be distracting drivers
Ella Adams

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, Oct. 8, 2026.....An architect of the 2019 hands-free driving law and the state's top public safety official say technology may be outpacing the law banning motorists from using handheld electronic devices while driving.

"Our phones can do more today, and there are more ways than ever for technology to compete for a driver's attention. Our approach to roadway safety must keep pace," Public Safety and Security Secretary Gina Kwon said Wednesday.

When Sen. Mark Montigny first filed a hands-free driving bill in 2004, "texting wasn't even available," the New Bedford Democrat said. Now, scores of business meetings and casual FaceTime conversations are happening every day.

After years of a difficult-to-enforce ban on texting while driving in Massachusetts,

supporters in 2019 approved a hands-free law to create safer driving conditions. But the law has a "loophole" due to newer technology, Sen. Jo Comerford said during a State House hearing.

"The current hands-free driving law bans holding or viewing a mobile device, but it doesn't explicitly prohibit recording of video while the device is mounted or hands-free," Comerford said.

The senators referred to the 2021 death of Northampton musician Charlie Braun, who was killed while riding a bicycle by a driver who was on a FaceTime call. A Comerford bill (S 2349) would ban live broadcasting and video recording while driving. The Transportation Committee, co-chaired by Rep. James Arciero and Sen. Brendan Crighton, sent the bill to a dead-end study in March.

"I'm just wondering if this is an issue that's before you, or is part of your thinking in terms of how this law has rolled out and how it's being implemented?" Comerford asked.

Gov. Maura Healey's Cabinet chief replied, "This is exactly what I was thinking when I said that technology has sort of outpaced some of our statutes."

"I think the proliferation of cellphones, Zoom hearings — you hear these things about people showing up to court hearings while they're driving," Kwon said. "I think any type of distracted driving, whether it's when you're Zooming, you're texting, that is what we should be targeting in enforcement."

Under existing law, "No operator of a motor vehicle shall read or view text, images or video displayed on a mobile electronic device; provided, however, that an operator may view a map generated by a navigation system or application on a mobile electronic device that is mounted on or affixed to a vehicle's windshield, dashboard or center console in a manner that does not impede the operation of the motor vehicle." Operators face a $100 fine for first offense violations, $250 fine for second offenses, and $500 fine for third or subsequent offenses. Those who commit second or subsequent violations have to complete a program encouraging a change in driver behavior.

Comerford's bill would dictate that "No operator of a motor vehicle shall record, broadcast, or otherwise capture images or video of themselves. No operator shall wear, hold, or otherwise utilize or interact with a spatial computer, or other augmented reality or mixed reality device, operating system, or three-dimensional user interface." The operator "shall not view video, images or text unrelated to the operation, maintenance, or navigation of the motor vehicle that is displayed on a monitor, screen or other display installed in the motor vehicle or otherwise worn as a headset or elsewhere on the operator's body," with some exceptions.

There's also evidence that the current efforts to curb distracted driving are not deterring some motorists.

AAA's 2025 Traffic Safety Culture Index found that while most drivers think scrolling social media, texting or emailing, and reading on a hand-held phone are extremely or very dangerous, 10% reported scrolling through social media, 28% reported sending a text or email, and 38% reported reading one while driving.

Implementation of the hands-free law took effect in 2020, and citations for violating the law were climbing as of 2023. In 2026, 185 participating local departments have conducted 8,681 hours of enforcement and wrote nearly 8,000 citations and warnings, Kwon said.

The State Police conducted over 2,000 hours of enforcement and wrote around 7,000 citations and warnings — about 4,000 were for distracted driving, she added.

Registrar of Motor Vehicles Colleen Ogilvie said that between 2015 and 2019, officers issued an average of 7,885 distracted driver citations annually, reflecting a compound annual growth rate of 8%. From 2020 through 2025, that average reached 12,795, representing a 13% compound annual growth rate. She said that around 389,830 citations and warnings have been issued for distracted driving since February 2020. Approximately 74% were warnings and 23% were civil motor vehicle infractions.

AAA Northeast Senior Manager of Government Affairs Christina Hayman said rear-end crashes declined by more than 23% from 2022 to 2025, but noted the importance of continuing education and said hands-free operation, like voice-to-text, is still distracting.

"While total vehicle-in-traffic crashes declined by approximately 8%, the significant decrease in rear-end crashes suggests that the law may be helping to address the significant crash[es] commonly associated with driver inattention and distraction," Hayman said. Other factors, like the increasing number of vehicles with automatic breaking systems and fewer people commuting to work, could be contributing, but she called the overall decline "good news."

Citing crash data, Ogilvie said that from 2015 to 2019, Massachusetts averaged around 11,108 crashes per year where the crash report indicated distracted driving was involved. The average dropped to approximately 9,056 per year from 2020 to 2025. Electronic distraction represented about 30% of all distracted driving crashes in the 2015 to 2019 period, she said, and 25% of them between 2020 and 2025.

While crash reports can provide indicators, they also depend upon observations after a crash, and distracted driving and electronic device use "can be difficult to identify conclusively after the fact," Ogilvie noted.

Both enforcement and public education are critical to decreasing those figures, Ogilvie said, listing off state campaigns to prevent and stop distracted driving. Safe Roads Alliance President Emily Stein said some drivers seem to treat the law as a suggestion.

"It's clear that companies need to re-educate their employees about distracted driving, and that hands-free is a law," Stein said, suggesting that companies and municipalities need to equip their trucks and other vehicles with a phone mount for drivers "so if it's required for drivers to be accountable, they can use the phone in a hands-free manner."

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Campaign Notebook: Nicotine Politics | Analyzing Baker's Endorsement | DCR & The Nature Fund

State House News Service

... He's the first Republican to run for district attorney in Bristol County in half a century, so why is former Republican Gov. Charlie Baker backing his Democratic opponent? Swansea Republican Seth Aitken, the former Fall River city administrator who is hoping to beat Dartmouth Rep. Chris Markey in November, said in a Friday debate he thinks Baker and former Lt. Gov. Karyn Polito backed the Democrat Markey for "political" reasons and suggested the move could benefit their future plans. "I believe those reasons have to do with whatever it is that Charlie Baker may have planned or Karyn Polito may have planned in the future," Aitken said during the debate hosted by WPRI-TV. "I understand it. This is politics. I don't begrudge the choice, but I certainly don't agree with it." Polito, who was elected from Shrewsbury, owns a second home in Bristol County, having purchased a Dartmouth property for $1.8 million in late 2020. Markey, who broke with his own party and backed the Republican ticket for reelection in 2018, said Baker and Polito support him because they saw the work he did as a legislator and "they also know me as a person." "I don't think this job has anything to do with politics; it has to do with experience and judgment. And when you have 35 years of experience working in the criminal justice system, like I have, and the experiences in the Legislature, and the management skills I had as a second assistant district attorney, all of those together, I think, is why someone like Charlie Baker and Karyn Polito are supporting me," Markey said. In August, Baker told Boston Globe columnist Joan Vennochi that he endorsed Markey because "Chris Markey is just a good human being" and he is desperate "for people who treat others in public life with courtesy and respect that endorsing him from my point of view was a no brainer." Aitken said he supported Baker early on but felt "at some point, Charlie Baker lost his way." Polito was a special guest last week at a MassGOP breakfast to support get-out-the-vote efforts supporting efforts "across all 29 targeted races" the party is running candidates in this fall. "As a former local and legislative official, I believe strongly in building a strong Republican farm team and growing Republican representation in the Massachusetts Legislature," Polito wrote in the event invitation ... -- Colin A. Young

... Anne Brensley said on the radio this week that, should she be elected secretary of state in November, one of her leading initiatives would be one focused on young entrepreneurs. "I have an open for business initiative that would essentially allow anybody under the age of 30, any veterans, to start businesses in Massachusetts for free," the Wayland Republican told GBH Radio. The secretary of state's office oversees the registration of business entities through its Corporations Division. "So this is a new vision, right? We haven't seen something like that -- an outreach to entrepreneurs, an encouragement to start businesses here," Brensley said, adding that she would also be focused on driving voter engagement and turnout. GBH co-host Jim Braude noted that Democrat Bill Galvin, the longtime incumbent secretary of state, is behind the ballot question that would allow people to register and vote on Election Day, which Galvin and others say will increase voter turnout. Brensley said she's not on board with the idea behind Question 4. "I oppose same-day. We're not there ... let's talk about that in the future. But right now, we have Boston is under receivership. It's literally having problems creating its or administrating their elections, we have New Bedford, we have Lawrence," she said, without elaborating on elections-related issues outside of Boston. "We've seen major issues within the overall voting record. But then on top of that, you have what is it now? We have mail-in ballots going out right now, being delivered. We have about six weeks of time between our primary and our general election, we're trying to squeeze everything in, and that's squeezing town clerks. That really is pushing the system." ... -- Colin A.

Young

... The Department of Conservation and Recreation is "taking a hopeful approach" to Question 6 on November's ballot, which would dedicate a portion of sales tax revenue collected on sporting goods sales into a new fund focused on natural conservation, but is not taking an official position on the initiative, Commissioner Nicole LaChapelle said Thursday. "DCR is technically neutral on it. The administration, governor and down, have endorsed, but because the funding stream and allocation that would actually go to DCR is unknown -- we're supportive of any funding that goes towards DCR, and look forward to see how Question 6 actually rolls out," she told the DCR Stewardship Council during its meeting. The proposed law would allow the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to spend money from the to-be-created Nature for All Fund for natural resource conservation and would also establish a 15-member Nature for All Board that consists of five state officials and ten members of the public appointed by the governor. Some members of the DCR Stewardship Council raised concerns with the ballot question Thursday, and some voiced their support for it. "It's clear as to where the funds will come from, but it isn't clear as to how it will be allocated, and it seems to me to be duplicative of what DCR already does," Stewardship Council member Ann Canedy said. Laura Jasinski, a Stewardship Council member and executive director of the Charles River Conservancy, said she and her organization support the ballot question. "I think that if we were doing a good job of funding DCR and our state parks, it might be a different story. But I think that we've all seen that we're not, and I think that the fund appropriately doesn't create a new tax," she said in response to Canedy. "I also think you bring up some good points and around the importance of the governance of it. My understanding is those conversations are happening now and perhaps that's something that the council should share some thoughts on." ... -- Colin A. Young

... As part of its long-running opposition to so-called Nicotine-Free Generation municipal regulations that prohibit the sale of nicotine products to anyone born on or after a certain cutoff date, the New England Convenience Store and Energy Marketers Association filed a blitz of public records requests and launched a website to highlight documents it got back that it says show "a coordinated campaign to push controversial generational tobacco bans with little to no public input." About two dozen communities across Massachusetts have adopted the policies that ban the sale of nicotine products in perpetuity for people who are currently in their teens or younger, and 16 municipalities have rejected similar proposals, NECSEMA said. The trade group filed public records requests with 16 municipalities and with the Department of Public Health, and says the documents provided show outcomes were decided before local board votes, some local support was manufactured or exaggerated, and some officials sought to avoid public input on the proposals. In documents related to the policy's development in Newton, NECSEMA says, a supporter of the policy claimed to have arranged to have a coached advocate repeat a statement from a campaign flyer at a public hearing, writing: "I made the quote up but I'm sure it's not too far from the truth and I can probably find someone to say it." Peter Brennan, executive director of NECSEMA, said the behavior documented on the group's new website reveal "is egregious." "What we have seen is that the more people learn about NFG, the less they like it. Communities that have taken it to a public vote have rejected it because it does nothing to curb youth smoking and instead tramples on adult civil liberties, hurts small businesses, siphons tax dollars out of Massachusetts and fuels unregulated black markets," he said. Legislation that would impose an NFG policy statewide was sent to a dead-end study in both the House and Senate this session ... -- Colin A. Young

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Safety chief says Flock cameras may need 'PR makeover'
Ella Adams

Automated license plate recognition technology may need a "PR makeover," the state's top public safety official said this week, telling lawmakers Wednesday it would "be a shame" to lose the investigative tool due to privacy concerns.

People are debating the technology nationwide due to the potential inappropriate use of it by law enforcement and privacy concerns. There's interest in placing guardrails on it although no single proposal is gaining momentum.

"When I think about the lives saved, the dangerous individuals apprehended, it's an important tool that has solved crimes and recovered victims and vulnerable individuals. But again, it has to be balanced with the right policies and procedures," Public Safety Secretary Gina Kwon told Sen. Mark Montigny at a State House hearing, referring to a kidnapping case and murder case that she said both involved LPR use to solve.

"It does need some attention, and I think maybe a PR makeover because the technology is important, and I think what gets lost sometimes in the privacy conversation are the successes, and I think you can have both," Kwon said. She noted that misuse of the technology has been mostly "along the lines of individual officers not using it for actual criminal or investigative purposes," and that it's still "a vital investigative tool."

In Massachusetts over the last 18 months, 25 municipalities have canceled contracts with Flock Safety or discontinued pilot programs testing the company's cameras, according to the ACLU of Massachusetts.

"That balance hopefully can be found," Montigny said. "All the stuff that is out there in the public domain causing the concern is legitimate. These are not just, you know, protesters with tin hats."

He added that he doesn't think every community in Massachusetts should have an individual ALPR policy.

Suggesting model policies or a regulatory framework, Kwon said, "I don't think the answer is to wipe it out completely."

"I think balancing privacy interests — and we do it with all kinds of technology — is important to whatever that looks like in the next legislative session, I hope we can be a partner," Kwon said. "I think it would really be a shame to lose the technology in the whole privacy argument."

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Senate Session Summary - Thursday, Oct. 8, 2026
State House News Service

The Senate on Thursday enacted bills dealing with matters in Boylston, Hopkinton, Berlin, Auburn and Grafton, and advanced bills affecting Provincetown, Wellesley

and Berlin. The Senate plans to meet again Tuesday. – Katie Castellani

CONVENES: The Senate convened at 11:12 a.m. with Sen. Collins of South Boston presiding.

PLEDGE: Senators, guests and staff rose to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

BERLIN: The Senate adopted a Sen. Fattman motion to reconsider the vote it took in its previous session to order to a third reading and engross S 2626 relative to the select board of the town of Berlin.

RESOLUTION: The Senate adopted a resolution from Sen. Feeney of Foxborough.

VETERANS: The Senate referred to the Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs SD 3836 amending the eligibility date for annuities for blind veterans, paraplegic veterans or veterans with disabilities.

BOYLSTON CONTRACT: The Senate enacted S 3088 authorizing a certain employment contract for the town of Boylston.

HOPKINTON BRIDGE: The Senate enacted H 3608 designating a bridge in Hopkinton as the Major General Frank D. Merrill memorial bridge.

BERLIN ELECTIONS: The Senate enacted H 3896 providing for recall elections in the town of Berlin.

AUBURN SMALL PROP TAX: The Senate enacted H 4754 expanded small property tax abatements in Auburn.

GRAFTON SENIOR TAX EXEMPTION: The Senate enacted H 5035 relative to Grafton's senior tax exemption.

EASTHAMPTON LICENSES: The Senate ordered to a third reading H 5547 extending the timeframe for the issuance of licenses granted pursuant to Chapter 46 of the Acts of 2020 in the city of Easthampton.

PROVINCETOWN HOUSING: The Senate engrossed H 3909 authorizing the Provincetown year-round market rate rental housing trust to acquire year-round housing occupancy restrictions.

WELLESLEY DIGITAL NOTICES: Question came on ordering to third reading H 4138 allowing "print-free" digital legal notices for the town of Wellesley. The Senate adopted a Creem amendment striking the text of the bill and inserting the text of S 3272, and ordered the amended bill to third reading and engrossed it.

BERLIN SELECT BOARD: The Senate ordered to a third reading H 4580 relative to the select board of the town of Berlin. The Senate accepted a report from the Committee on Bills in the Third Reading recommending the bill be consolidated with S 2626. The bill was engrossed.

HOUSE DOCKETS: Sen. Collins said the Senate referred several House dockets to their respective committees. The Senate's agenda shows the following House dockets were set to receive committee assignments:

The Senate referred to the Committee on Public Service HD 6371 establishing a sick leave bank for Gina Dellagatta, an employee of the department of mental health.

The Senate referred to the Committee on Transportation HD 5998 concerning school bus safety (Lens' Law).

ADJOURNMENT ORDER: The Senate adopted an order to meet next on Tuesday at 11 a.m.

ADJOURNS: The Senate adjourned at 11:24 a.m. with plans to meet next on Tuesday at 11 a.m.

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House Session Summary - Thursday, Oct. 8, 2026
State House News Service

The House dealt with smaller, local bills impacting Tisbury, Boylston, Hopkinton, Berlin, Auburn, Grafton, Sudbury and Boston during a short session Thursday. The branch will meet next informally on Tuesday morning following a long holiday weekend, while 12 conference committees are still the midst of negotiations. – Ella Adams

CONVENES: Rep. Garballey of Arlington gaveled the House into session at 11 a.m. Rep. Wong of Saugus was also present.
PLEDGE: Members, guests and staff rose to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

SICK LEAVE BANK: The House concurred with the Senate in sending to the Committee on Public Service SD 4225, a petition for legislation establishing a sick leave bank for Margaret Connolly-Masson, an employee of the Massachusetts Maritime Academy.

SICK LEAVE BANK: The House sent to the Committee on Public Service HD 6368, a petition for legislation establishing a sick leave bank for Jonathan Murphy, an employee of the Human Resources Division.

TISBURY SELECT BOARD: The House ordered to a third reading H 5655 expanding the select board of the town of Tisbury.

ENACTMENTS: The House enacted the following bills on one voice vote:

– S 3088 authorizing a certain employment contract for the town of Boylston;
– H 3608 designating a certain bridge in the town of Hopkinton as the Major General Frank D. Merrill memorial bridge;
– H 3896 providing for recall elections in the town of Berlin;
– H 4754 relative to expanded small property tax abatements in the Town of Auburn;
– H 5035 relative to Grafton's senior tax exemption.

ORDERS OF THE DAY: There were no objections to proceeding with the Orders of the Day.

SUDBURY SENIOR PROPERTY TAX: The House concurred with the Senate amendment, S 3270, to H 4755 amending the means tested senior citizen property

tax exemption in the town of Sudbury.

BOSTON POLICE OFFICERS: The House engrossed S 3017 directing the city of Boston police department to waive the maximum age requirement for police officers for Elijah George Osborne. The House then engrossed H 5514 directing the city of Boston Police Department to waive the maximum age requirement for police officers for Jorge Enriquez.

SICK LEAVE BANK: The House ordered to a third reading H 5685 establishing a sick leave bank for Carry Shulock-Sexton, an employee of the Department of Agricultural Resources.

MOMENT OF SILENCE: At the request of Rep. Worrell of Boston, members, guests and staff stood in a moment of silence for Janet Jones of Dorchester, who passed away June 21. Jones was a community organizer and advocate who helped found the Greater Bowdoin-Geneva Neighborhood Association and the Dorchester-Roxbury Labor Committee.

ADJOURNMENT ORDER: The House adopted a Rep. Mariano of Quincy order to meet next on Tuesday at 11 a.m.

ADJOURNS: The House adjourned at 11:14 a.m. to meet next on Tuesday at 11 a.m. in an informal session

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State, CSX agree to rail upgrades in the Berkshires
Colin A. Young

An agreement struck between the Department of Transportation and railroad company CSX will reduce conflicts between freight trains and the state's desire to further expand passenger rail service in the Berkshires, the Healey administration said Thursday.

MassDOT has agreed to fund construction of a new siding and other track improvements around Pittsfield to increase rail capacity, and to consider the feasibility of a new platform at Pittsfield Station, work the governor's office said "will provide the infrastructure needed to support permanent seasonal weekend Berkshire Flyer service and lay additional groundwork for expanded passenger rail in Western Massachusetts." CSX owns the tracks and MassDOT says the work will benefit freight as well as passenger trains, but the administration did not specify what CSX committed to under the agreement.

The Berkshire Flyer service has operated summer weekend passenger rail service between Pittsfield and New York City since 2022.

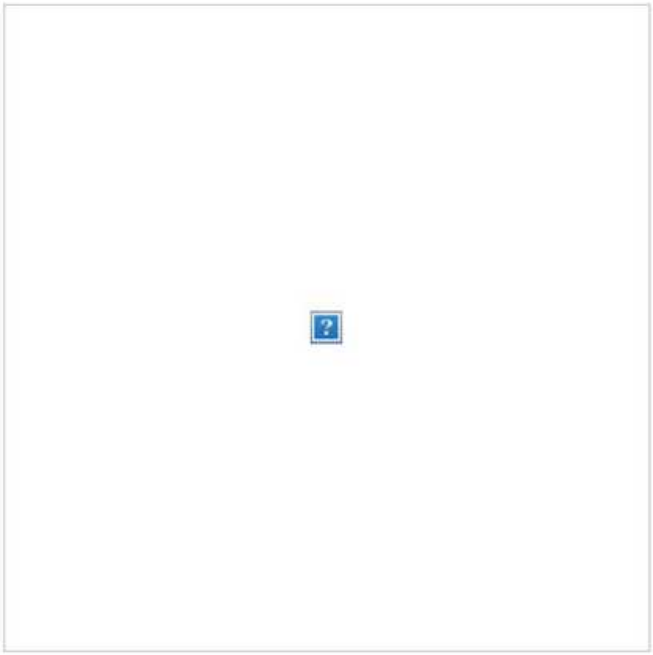
Amtrak runs the trains, supported by MassDOT. At the same time, the state has been inching toward expanding passenger service from Boston, through Worcester, Springfield and Pittsfield to Albany, New York, via the long-discussed East-West Rail project. All are part of the state's "Compass Rail" vision for intercity passenger rail throughout Massachusetts.

"The Berkshire Flyer has already shown what better transportation connections can

mean for a region — more visitors, stronger local businesses and another reliable option for residents," Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll said. "Now we're taking the next step by making the infrastructure investments needed to sustain this service for the long term while continuing to move our broader passenger rail vision forward for Western Massachusetts."

Pittsfield Mayor Peter Marchetti said the rail connection to New York City is "an important asset" for his city. But MassDOT says the service's "on-time performance has been hampered by conflicts with freight trains," and notes that there are long stretches of single track on the CSX-owned corridor between Albany and Pittsfield.

MassDOT included $31 million for the Pittsfield track capacity project in its most recent capital plan. A year ago, the department said its planning showed "that adding a 3-mile siding track (second track for passing trains) in Richmond near the Pittsfield border and a new track switch in Pittsfield would bring operational benefits by increasing corridor capacity."



Questions?
Please reach out to Andrew Napolitano.

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Daily Advances & SHNS Articles

October 8, 2026

Gov. Maura Healey

5:30.....Candidates for governor Maura Healey and Mike Minogue square off in their first debate, hosted by WBZ-TV. "It's gonna be a barnburner," moderator Jon Keller said.....WBZ-TV, 1170 Soldiers Field Road, Boston

Daily Events

8:00.....MASSterList and State House News Service host "Healthcare Cost Crunch: Understanding Drivers and Designing Solutions in Mass." Speakers include Health and Human Services Kiame Mahaniah, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts CEO Sarah Iselin, Beth Israel Lahey COO Peter Shorett, Harvard Medical School professor Michael Chernew and Dr. Zirui Song of Mass. General Hospital. Healthcare spending in Massachusetts has repeatedly eclipsed the state's cost containment benchmark, with soaring costs affecting the decisions people make about getting care and forcing residents and employers to weigh bottom line financial decisions.....UMass Club, 1 Beacon St., Boston | Register

8:30.....Sen. Howard joins the Greater Boston Food Bank and Dwelling House of Hope in Lowell to celebrate a $25,000 Community Investment Grant for transportation, computer upgrades and food pantry improvements. GBFB President and CEO Carl Howell plans to attend.....Dwelling House of Hope, 125 Mount Hope St., Lowell

9:00.....DCR Stewardship Council meets. Agenda includes a report from DCR Commissioner Nicole LaChapelle, a partnership update and public comment.....Agenda and Zoom

9:30.....Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce hosts a hybrid discussion about the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation's annual competitiveness index and poll. The index explores the commonwealth's strengths and weaknesses, as well as factors influencing economic growth, business competitiveness and quality of life. Speakers include MTF President Doug Howgate, Travis McCready of commercial real estate

firm JLL, Babson College President Stephen Spinelli Jr., Associated Industries of Massachusetts President Brooke Thomson, and chamber CEO Jim Rooney.....265 Franklin St., Suite 1701, Boston | Register

10:00.....Massachusetts DeafBlind Awareness Day highlights importance of services to support residents who are deafblind. The event's theme is "From Infants to Elders: Real Stories...Real Lives." Rep. Livingstone gives remarks.....Great Hall

10:00.....Boston After School & Beyond celebrates its "5th Quarter of Learning" with state and city education leaders, including DESE Commissioner Pedro Martinez and Boston Public Schools Superintendent Mary Skipper. The event will feature data from summer 2026 on enrollment, attendance and student skill growth, along with recognition of summer programs and discussion of summer learning.....School Committee Room, Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building, 2300 Washington St., Roxbury

10:00.....Federal, state and local officials tour new 56-unit, transit-oriented, mixed-income apartment community in Braintree, according to Winn Development. Media are welcome to attend the VIP tour of The EastWalk, built on the long-vacant location of the power plant and offices for the Braintree Electric Light Department. Expected attendees include Congressman Stephen Lynch, Housing Secretary Juana Matias, Mayor Erin Joyce, former Mayor Joseph Sullivan, Sen. Keenan, Rep. Cusack.....44 Allen Street, Braintree

10:30.....Massachusetts Water Resources Authority Advisory Board takes a field trip to Stoneham. The event features a dedication of the newly named Laskey Building, formerly the Spot Pond Covered Storage Facility, in honor of Fred Laskey's 25 years as MWRA executive director.....15 Woodland Road, Stoneham | Register

10:30.....Ellie Fund and the Massachusetts Caucus of Women Legislators convene researchers, clinicians, patient advocates, and lawmakers for an expert panel focused on breast cancer action. "This annual event and collective show of support have been instrumental in raising awareness of the racial and gender disparities that persist in breast cancer prevention, access to care, treatment, and outcomes," organizers said. "Despite similar or slightly lower incidence rates, Black women experience a 38% higher breast cancer mortality rate than White women nationally. Structural barriers —including the cost of care, access to timely, high-quality health services, and geographic inequities—can determine who receives the resources, treatment, and support needed to survive and thrive.....Room 428, State House

12:00.....Former state Education Secretary Jim Peyser hosts former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education under President Trump, Jim Blew, for the Harvard Kennedy School's Education Policy Colloquium. Blew will discuss the federal scholarship tax credit, which goes into effect in January 2027, but has not been authorized in Massachusetts.....Wapp Cason Seminar Room, Taubman 102, Harvard Kennedy School, 79 John F. Kennedy St., Cambridge

12:00.....UMass Amherst hosts a forum on Question 9 to uphold or repeal the 2024 gun reform law. Speakers include Toby Leary, leader of The Civil Rights Coalition and No on 9 Campaign, and Megan DesAutels, campaign coordinator for the Yes on 9 Campaign. The event is part of the Commonwealth Ballot Forum Initiative that also involves Salem State University and Worcester State University.....UMass Amherst, Old Chapel, Great Hall, Amherst

12:15.....Salem State University hosts forum on Question 7, the ballot measure enabling single-family homes to be built on smaller lots. Speakers include Andrew Mikula, campaign chair for Yes on 7, and Dave Koffman of the Mass. Municipal

Association who's representing the opposition. The event is part of the Commonwealth Ballot Forum Initiative that also involves UMass Amherst and Worcester State University.....Salem State University, Forten 123, Harrington Campus, Salem

4:00.....Massachusetts Vaccine Purchasing Advisory Council meets. The group's role is to help with the distribution of recommended childhood vaccines. Massachusetts has disentangled itself from federal immunization recommendations after Health and Human Services Secretary Robert Kennedy Jr. overhauled a key advisory panel. For remote access, contact cmcreynolds@mcaap.org.....Massachusetts Medical Society, 860 Winter St., Waltham | More Info

5:30.....Former NASA astronaut and Navy SEAL Christopher Cassidy is the featured speaker at a leadership forum hosted by the USS Constitution Museum. WCVB anchor and reporter Ben Simmoneau moderates the conversation. The event starts with a cocktail reception at 5:30 p.m., followed by the program at 6:30 p.m.....USS Constitution Museum, Charlestown Navy Yard, Boston

6:00.....Department of Conservation and Recreation holds a public meeting to review final draft recommendations for the Leominster State Forest Trail Master Plan.....More Info and Zoom

6:00.....MassVOTE honors five individuals as its inaugural Catalysts for Democracy. The celebration marks the group's 25th anniversary and will feature Congresswoman Pressley as keynote speaker, with special recognition for longtime Boston journalist and community leader Karen Holmes Ward. The public voting initiative generated 1,843 ballots, and organizers plan to recognize Dorothea M. Jones, Rita Lara, Jordan Berg Powers, Harison Mitchell Clark and Courtney Henderson.....Jazz Urbane Café, 2300 Washington Street, Roxbury

7:00.....MassDOT holds a public meeting about a proposed bridge preservation and superstructure replacement project in Conway and Shelburne. It involves Bardwell's Ferry Road over the Deerfield River.....Conway Grammar School, 24 Fournier Road, Conway | More Info

The Legislature

11:00.....House meets in an informal session.....House Chamber

11:00.....Senate meets in an informal session.....Senate Chamber

Editor's Notes:

....NURSE CONTRACT TALKS: Brigham and Women's Hospital MNA Bargaining Committee plans to meet Thursday with hospital management to negotiate a contract. The nurses could launch an indefinite strike on Oct. 14.

Health Connector expects another 'unique' sign-up period amid federal cuts

Officials note new sign-ups outpaced departures last year and hope to offset losses

again
Alison Kuznitz

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, Oct. 7, 2026.....The open enrollment period at the state's health insurance marketplace is about two weeks away, and officials are anticipating another wave of coverage losses tied to federal eligibility changes.

Last year's open enrollment window was particularly bumpy, as state leaders unsuccessfully pleaded with Congress to extend federal subsidies under the Affordable Care Act. Gov. Maura Healey ultimately pumped an additional $250 million into heavily subsidized plans to prevent premium spikes.

This cycle will be "another unique open enrollment period," predicted Massachusetts Health Connector Executive Director Audrey Morse Gasteier, as the state absorbs the ongoing effects of the federal One Big Beautiful Bill Act.

People can sign up for coverage through the Connector, including heavily subsidized ConnectorCare plans for eligible Bay Staters, starting Oct. 23, with open enrollment stretching through Jan. 23, 2027. Residents must select a plan by Dec. 23 to ensure their coverage starts Jan. 1, while coverage selected after that deadline will take effect Feb. 1, said Erin Ryan, the Connector's deputy chief for external affairs.

Nearly 350,000 Bay Staters are currently enrolled in individual Connector coverage. People will need to navigate double-digit premium hikes and some discontinued plans, particularly among Tufts Direct and Fallon Health enrollees.

"We are working with all of our members in our communications and our outreach to make sure people understand their options, be they the availability of ConnectorCare and other supports to help people absorb cost challenges and make sure that they're in the right plan for them that fits their budget," Morse Gasteier said during a media briefing Wednesday afternoon.

"There's a lot of cost challenges and pressures that families across the commonwealth and the country are facing right now, so we understand how tough some of the decisions facing people around health coverage and plan choices can be, particularly when it comes to cost," she added.

Under the state's individual mandate, residents must have health insurance that meets certain standards or face a tax penalty.

Insurance regulators approved an average premium jump of 10.4% in the merged market where many individuals and small businesses get coverage, and residents enrolling in the Connector's unsubsidized non-group plans will see an average premium increase of 12.4%.

About 30,000 to 35,000 lawfully present noncitizens are expected to lose their eligibility for federal subsidies on Jan. 1, though they'll be allowed to purchase Connector plans at full cost. Morse Gasteier said the Connector is "most worried" about those individuals, as she stressed other categories of immigrants like green card holders will remain eligible for federal subsidies.

Nearly 23,000 people terminated their Connector coverage for 2026, with about half of those enrollees affected by the expired federal tax credits. Meanwhile, more than

46,560 people newly enrolled in coverage for 2026. Morse Gasteier said she expects a similar dynamic this open enrollment cycle, with new enrollees offsetting coverage losses.

"There will be another tranche of individuals losing their subsidy eligibility because of federal policy, and we are going to be doing everything we can, working with those populations to help support them and deciding if they could afford to or want to remain in coverage," Morse Gasteier said. She added, "But if many of them do end up leaving coverage, we are also going to be very hard at work trying to sign up other individuals and hopefully balance out any enrollment losses, so that we are keeping pace with our goals and keeping as many people in Massachusetts as possible covered."

The Connector's call center and more than 50 in-person "navigator" locations around the state are available for residents who need help selecting insurance plans, Ryan said. There are also 24 navigator organizations that provide personalized assistance in nearly 30 languages.

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Bipartisan panel sees Democrats poised to retake the U.S. House
Democratic majority could put Massachusetts pols back in powerful roles
Katie Castellani

BOSTON, MASS., Oct. 7, 2026.....With less than a month until the midterm elections, a bipartisan quartet of former federal lawmakers and advisers agreed Wednesday that Democrats are likely to win control of Congress, and that it sets up several New England lawmakers to hold powerful positions that can help funnel funds to the region.

Former Democratic U.S. Rep. Toby Moffett of Connecticut likened this year's midterms to previous "wave elections" where discontent with the current administration led to the opposing party – currently Democrats – gaining seats.

"How does the country feel about itself? That's what we have to ask ourselves," Moffett said during a panel discussion on Wednesday at the UMass Club in Boston co-hosted by the Massachusetts Competitive Partnership and Mercury Public Affairs. "And in all those wave elections, where Republicans or Democrats prevail, the country didn't feel good about itself. And I think that's where we are today."

If Democrats win back the House, several lawmakers representing New England states are teed up to take on powerful roles, he said.

That's what happened in the 2018 midterm elections when Democrats gained a net of 40 seats in the House halfway through President Donald Trump's first term. At that time, Bay State Democrats U.S. Reps. Richard Neal and Jim McGovern became chairs of the House Ways and Means and Rules Committees, respectively. Neal and McGovern have been ranking members of their respective committees since 2023, after Republicans took back control of the House in 2022.

The current top U.S. House members – Speaker Mike Johnson and Majority Leader Steve Scalise – are both Louisiana Republicans. U.S. Rep. Hakeem Jeffries, a New York Democrat, is the House minority leader, making him a top candidate to become

speaker if his party wins back the majority. U.S. Rep. Katherine Clark, a Massachusetts Democrat from Revere, is minority whip, establishing her as a likely contender for majority leader under the next Democratic-controlled House.

"Whatever party we're from, or whatever our ideology, it's a potential massive change," Moffett said.

James Messner, former deputy political director for Scalise, said Democrats are "looking like they're going to take the House" and agreed that could lead to funding flowing to New England.

In the past year, National Institutes of Health funding has been moved away from New England and to institutions in "flyover country – and they actually use that language in appropriations meetings," Messner said.

"Which is, in my opinion, a big disservice to this country because there's a lot of experts that have been doing this for a while, and with Democrats poised to take over in the New York and New England area, I think that's going to be a massive fight that you're going to see for the next two years and beyond: is reassuring that money is back in New England and New York," he continued.

However, Messner noted the Democrats' margin of power in the House will be crucial, and the math is not on their side. He said that's partly because redistricting has led to the number of battleground seats falling from around 75 in 2018 to approximately 20 now.

"So even in a wave, the math is going to be very, very difficult and very unique. And I think you certainly are going to see Jeffries perform well. He will be elected speaker. But if he has, I would say, below 228 in his caucus, he's going to have some difficulties," Messner said.

"You need cushions. We're seeing Johnson operate without a cushion, and nothing is getting done on the floor. Nothing's happening out of rules, and I think that that's in the back of the mind of Jeffries, and it's scaring him," he added.

Republicans hold a slim majority in the House with 218 seats – along with one Independent caucusing with the GOP – and Democrats have 214, and there are two vacancies.

Former Democratic New Hampshire Congresswoman Annie Kuster noted she's careful with her election predictions and that she recently read the highest estimated margin Democrats could get in the House would be 240 seats. Kuster said that "seems like a very high watermark" but thinks it will land "well into the 230s."

Bryan Lanza, Trump's 2024 senior campaign adviser, said that from the administration's standpoint "Democrats will likely win the House. There's a strong probability they're going to win the U.S. Senate."

He said that usually happens during presidents' first terms in office and believes Democrats will have a close margin, which could expose fissures within the party that could have negative consequences for the party ahead of the 2028 presidential election.

"I think we're probably looking at a 15-seat switch – a 15- to 18-seat switch, which still brings it very close. Which is going to show chaos, which is what always happens," he said. "You're going to have chaos on the Democratic Party side fighting. You're going to have Republicans in the House fighting each other and the Senate fighting each other, and more importantly, you have this administration ignore Congress because that's the model that works."

Kuster said she's also "feeling good about where we're headed" and top Democrats will have to start out right away addressing "kitchen table issues" that may not be easy to solve.

"They've got to come out of the gate with something strong that makes a difference in real people's real lives, and you know, most notably, the rollbacks in healthcare are just killing us," she said.

Still, she said there will likely be Democrats focused on investigating corruption within the Trump administration, among other concerns. Moffett agreed, adding that he thinks Democrats will lean into policymaking after a period of oversight and accountability.

However, Moffett told the News Service that under Trump, Democrats could have a difficult time getting policies through to fulfill promises to voters. Moffett said it still places them in a better position than Republicans heading into 2028 who would have less power in Congress and are following a GOP president with a low approval rating. Trump's approval rating sits at 37%, according to The New York Times. He also said the administration could be held in contempt of Congress if it totally ignored Congress.

"I'm pretty optimistic, but I do think our getting into power again comes with real responsibility, and if we don't fulfill that, then we'll be weak in [2028]," Moffett told the News Service.

Lanza said Democrats would likely not get enough votes to impeach Trump and it's "very unlikely," they'll advance meaningful policy, leading to a disillusioned voter base heading into 2028.

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Personnel File -- Wednesday, Oct. 7, 2026
Who's on the move?
State House News Service

... Attorney General Andrea Campbell's second-in-command has left to work in the private sector, capping his latest stint in government, and a longtime office veteran has been promoted to take his place ... A senior housing nonprofit has a new chief, and is ramping up affordable housing development around the state ... A former top aide to Treasurer Shannon O'Brien started a leadership position at a global health organization ... Please enjoy the latest edition of the Personnel File ...

MOORE

FayFoto Boston
PATRICK MOORE, the former deputy counsel to Govs. Deval Patrick and Charlie

Baker who was first assistant attorney general since the start of Attorney General Andrea Campbell's term nearly four years ago, left state government and is now working on commercial and government-facing litigation, crisis management, and regulatory matters at WilmerHale. Moore's previous experience includes stints as a partner at Hemenway & Barnes, as associate counsel and advisor for presidential personnel in the Obama White House and as deputy general counsel on Joe Biden's 2020 presidential campaign. Early in his legal career, Moore practiced at Ropes & Gray where he participated in a fellowship in the government bureau of the Massachusetts attorney general's office. He served as a law clerk to Judge Maryanne Trump Barry of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit and to former Judge Robert Cordy of the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court. Succeeding Moore as first assistant attorney general is ABBY TAYLOR, who has been Campbell's chief deputy attorney general since the start of 2025. Taylor previously worked in the office as chief of the Civil Rights Division for nearly four years and as director of the Child and Youth Protection Unit. She also previously worked as a trial attorney in the criminal fraud division of the U.S. Department of Justice, where she prosecuted defendants involved in healthcare fraud schemes, the office said when she was promoted to director of the youth protection team.

ROBSON

DWIGHT ROBSON started work this month as chief business officer for the U.S. division of APM, a global health and human services organization. "What makes this opportunity especially meaningful is that it continues a thread that has run throughout much of my career: helping mission-driven organizations grow and extend their reach," Robson wrote on LinkedIn. "At both The MENTOR Network (now Sevita) and, most recently, Roca, I had the privilege of working alongside extraordinary colleagues committed to improving the lives of others." Robson was a top aide to former Treasurer Shannon O'Brien.

RICHARD WALSH was appointed to the board of addiction recovery nonprofit Power Forward, which was founded by former Pittsburgh Penguin and Stanley Cup champion Kevin Stevens. Walsh is president and CEO of construction management firm Walsh Brothers. Power Forward initiatives include scholarships for sober housing for those in recovery, a service dog ownership program, and a new app to track resources available to recovering substance abusers. After his own struggles with substance abuse, Stevens founded Power Forward with his sister, Kelli Wilson, who is the group's president and CEO. Power Forward recently raised more than $800,000 at its second annual gala.

HEYER

LIZBETH HEYER has begun work as president and CEO OF 2Life Communities, which develops, manages and advocates for affordable housing and services that support aging in the community. Heyer has been with the organization since 2014. She replaces AMY SCHECTMAN, who retired after 16 years of leadership. 2Life Communities serves more than 2,100 residents at 12 properties located on seven campuses in Massachusetts. "As the number of older adults rapidly grows, Massachusetts has the highest rate of economic insecurity among older adults in the nation, primarily due to rising housing and healthcare costs," said Heyer. "Social isolation and loneliness can also pose significant risks to seniors' health and longevity. 2Life is addressing these challenges head on by building and operating high-quality supportive housing, and by advocating for the policy changes and public

investment needed to make affordable senior housing easier to build and sustain." 2Life said work is underway on Solimine House in Lynn, which is expected to open in fall of 2027 and provide 150 new units of affordable housing for financially vulnerable adults. 2Life is also planning to convert the former Thurgood Marshall Middle School into 114 apartments for Lynn seniors as part of its 19 Porter Street redevelopment. Later this year, construction will begin on Brooke House at Olmsted Village on 10 acres of the former Boston State Hospital site in Mattapan. "Brooke House will include 127 affordable senior housing units, along with a community health center and child care center on the ground floor. Within the same complex, Treehouse at Olmsted Village will have 66 affordable intergenerational apartments. Both are expected to open by 2028," according to 2Life.

-- Got a new chief of staff, executive director, campaign manager, press secretary, spokesperson, or otherwise important new person in your office or organization? Losing a valued worker to a new career opportunity? The News Service welcomes all personnel announcements, which will be aggregated for periodic publication, at personnelfile@statehousenews.com.

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New AI trade group launches with focus on health sector
One executive says lawmakers should regulate with 'appropriate nuance'
Colin A. Young

Oct. 7, 2026.....A new trade group launched this week to give artificial intelligence companies in the health, human services and life sciences worlds a collective voice in anticipation of state government writing the rules that will govern how AI can be deployed in hospitals, dentists' offices, group homes and more.

MassIntelligence launched with two founding member companies and plans to add 13 others by invitation. The founding member companies included in the group's launch are Impruvon Health, a Maryland-based company that has a Massachusetts state contract to provide an electronic medication record system for group homes and community programs, and California-based patient logistics company VectorCare.

Jay Youmans, a former state health official who now heads up the public affairs and strategic consultancy Bulfinch Strategies Group, co-founded the group with biotechnology strategist Mahnoosh Mirzaei. Bulfinch partner Thomas Mangan, a former state public health official, is the group's director of government affairs.

The group's formation comes as House and Senate negotiators privately debate how to regulate powerful AI models at the state level and as federal policymakers are also moving to impose greater government oversight on an industry that is fueling both economic expansion and constituent anxiety. U.S. Rep. Lori Trahan of Westford on Wednesday announced draft legislation to make it easier for people to sue AI developers in situation when an AI agent causes harm.

Youmans said Massachusetts should not try to replicate Silicon Valley's focus on general-purpose AI models. His group will look to hone the state's "competitive advantage [of] applying AI to the sectors where the Commonwealth already leads, like healthcare, human services and life sciences."

"We already have the hospitals and human-services providers, researchers and innovators, life sciences ecosystem, public-policy infrastructure and global credibility to lead the world in applying targeted AI innovations to real-world problems. MassIntelligence exists to meet this Massachusetts moment and ensure the companies already doing this transformational work are at the table when the rules governing it are written," Youmans, who previously held senior positions at the Department of Public Health and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services, said.

State government in Massachusetts is in the early stages of grappling with AI. The Executive Office of Technology Services and Security established a generative AI policy for state agencies; the attorney general outlined how existing consumer protection, civil rights and data security laws apply to AI; and the governor and Legislature have authorized $100 million for the Massachusetts AI Hub, with additional investment included in ongoing legislative negotiations.

"However, Massachusetts still lacks the operational rules governing how AI may be deployed in settings including hospitals, dental practices, group homes, and research programs. Current law does not yet fully define how sensitive health and research data may be used within health AI systems, what constitutes meaningful professional oversight, or how systems should be monitored after deployment," MassIntelligence said in its launch announcement. "Massachusetts has an opportunity to create a statewide framework for distinguishing low-risk tools from high-risk clinical applications, and existing law does not clearly allocate accountability when adverse events occur."

VectorCare CEO David Emanuel said state regulations should recognize different levels of risks for different uses of AI. He said powerful frontier models and purpose-built healthcare applications operate "in completely different contexts."

"Companies like ours are already using machine learning within existing care infrastructure to expand access, improve coordination and deliver measurable benefits for patients. Massachusetts needs rules that recognize those critical differences, regulate with appropriate nuance, and enable responsible innovation that delivers measurable improvements in people's lives while reducing inefficiencies," he said.

The Executive Office of Health and Human Services paid Impruvon, one of MassIntelligence's founding member companies, $14.4 million in July 2025 for a license running through June 2028. The deal gives providers in the Department of Public Health's Medication Administration Program a free electronic medication record system. DPH said in August 2025 that "Impruvon will reduce medication errors, limit turnover and simplify MAP compliance."

On Wednesday morning, Trahan released a "discussion draft" of her proposed Clear Liability for Artificial Intelligence Misconduct Act, which the congresswoman said aims to ensure that developers "answer for what their systems do." She is seeking feedback from experts, industry, advocates, and the public.

"When someone breaks the law and hurts you, you can take them to court. That shouldn't change just because the wrongdoer is an AI agent. Developers have already built systems capable of acting on their own and causing real damage," she said.

Trahan's office said people or companies harmed by "a misaligned AI agent face significant hurdles" to seeking justice.

"Many serious harms, including hacking and fraud, require proof of intent, and courts have not settled whether an AI system's conduct can meet that standard. Negligence and product liability claims typically require showing that a company failed to take a specific precaution or ignored a safer design," her office said. "Because AI alignment remains an unsolved technical problem, developers can argue the harm occurred despite their best efforts, leaving injured parties without a remedy."

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At State House event, advocates mark disability employment month
Alison Kuznitz

While applying for jobs, before she was hired at the Disability Policy Consortium, Maggie Sheets recalled feeling "deeply concerned" over when to disclose her disability and whether potential employers would judge her.

"I was drawn to DPC because it is run by and for people with disabilities across the commonwealth," Sheets said at an event Wednesday celebrating National Disability Employment Awareness Month.

"Before I was officially hired, my manager asked what accommodations I would need to succeed," Sheets, a research coordinator at the disability advocacy organization, continued. "I didn't have to awkwardly figure out how to ask — they initiated the conversation. And at DPC, it's continually made clear that we can bring our whole selves to work and that accommodations are an ongoing dialogue."

DPC received an award for its disability employment and inclusion efforts at the event hosted by the Massachusetts Permanent Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities. Hundreds of attendees representing the disability community, employers, lawmakers, state agency leaders, advocates and community organizations filled the Great Hall.

Commission Chair and former Rep. Denise Garlick said people with disabilities continue to face barriers in securing jobs, staying employed and having equal opportunities to grow and advance in their careers.

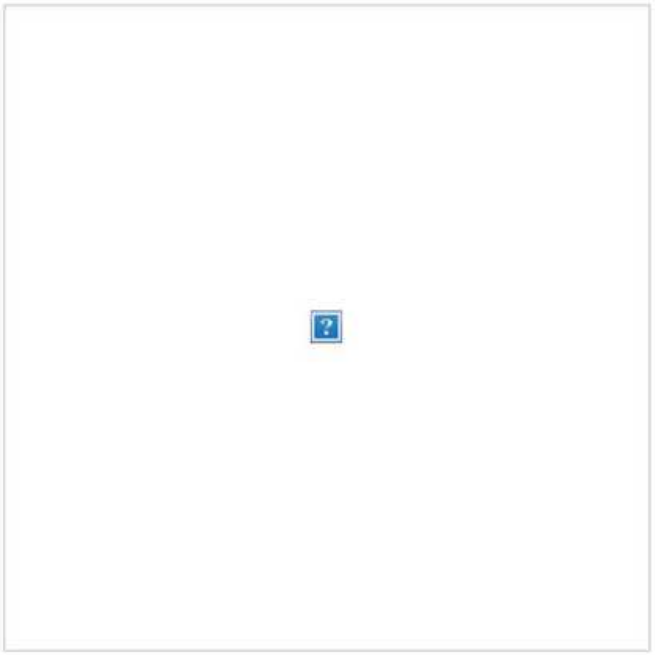
"But we also need to take the time to recognize progress when we see it, and to recognize the people who are helping people to move this forward. And that's what today is about," Garlick said.

Sen. Joan Lovely, who was also honored at the event, reflected on how artificial intelligence is reshaping the workplace.

"As technology changes how we hire and how we work, people with disabilities must be at the table from the very start," Lovely said. "Nothing about us without us."

Gov. Maura Healey issued a proclamation recognizing the 81st anniversary of the awareness month. It states: "Workplaces that embrace the talents of all individuals, including those with disabilities, are essential to fostering an inclusive community

and a robust economy."



Questions?
Please reach out to Andrew Napolitano.

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Daily Advances & SHNS Articles

October 6, 2026

Gov. Maura Healey

2:00.....Attends the groundbreaking ceremony for the Draper Integrated Microelectronics Production & Advanced Chip Technology Center, an 11,000-square-foot building featuring advanced microelectronic design, production and packing facilities. The technology will support Draper's U.S. defense, aerospace and government customers. Other attendees include Gov. Healey, Lt. Gov. Driscoll, U.S. Rep. Trahan, UMass President Marty Meehan, UMass Lowell Chancellor Julie Chen and Lowell Mayor Erik Gitschier.....350A Dutton St., Lowell

4:00.....Tours the satellite emergency facility in Groton as it reaches the final construction stage before its opening. Healey will be joined by U.S. Rep. Trahan and Secretary of Health and Human Services Mahaniah for a conversation with local officials, fire chiefs and other public safety officials on the roles they play in supporting healthcare access across the Nashoba Valley. Afterwards, anticipated for 4:30 p.m., Healey and Trahan will hold a media availability. Tour and roundtable are closed to press.....490 Main St., Groton

Daily Events

8:30.....FCC Commissioner Anna Gomez participates in a conversation about the First Amendment alongside Dartmouth College professor Brendan Nyhan. They'll discuss free speech, a free press and the Federal Communications Commission's role in the communications landscape. The event is hosted by the New England First Amendment Coalition and the Nackey S. Loeb School of Communications.....New Hampshire Institute of Politics at Saint Anselm College | Register

9:00.....Black Economic Council of Massachusetts hosts the Mass Black Expo, which showcases businesses, organizations and "allies committed to building a more equitable economy." Attorney General Campbell gives the keynote address, and U.S. Sen. Markey speaks. Attendees will learn about new pathways for business growth, entrepreneurship and wealth creation. The event runs through 6:30 p.m.....Omni

Boston Hotel, 450 Summer St., Boston, Seaport | Register

9:00.....Deadline to submit written testimony to Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security on a Rep. Moakley bill (H 5588) that would designate the regional lockup, which is operated by the Dukes County sheriff, as part of the jail.....More Info

9:30.....Massachusetts Gaming Commission holds a hearing on proposed regulations dealing with public or private transfers of interests in gaming licenses and sports wagering licenses.....More Info

10:00.....In honor of Disability Employment Awareness Month, Massachusetts Apprentice Network hosts a virtual event about how employers can intentionally recruit, hire and train individuals with disabilities through apprenticeships and other early talent pathways. Speakers include Becky Jackson Curran of Disability:IN, Rick Laferriere of CVS Health, Jamell Mitchell of EY and Michael Tamasi of AccuRounds.....Register

10:30.....Sen. Driscoll and the American Red Cross of Massachusetts host blood drive through 3:30 p.m. People can make an appointment or drop in.....Great Hall | Register

11:00.....Sen. Lewis hosts an informational session on the nine questions appearing on Massachusetts' Nov. 3 ballot. The session is intended to provide voters with information about what a "yes" or "no" vote would mean on each question.....Malden Senior Center, 7 Washington St., Malden

11:00.....Question 3 all-party primaries reform debate with supporter Danielle Allen and Sen. Lydia Edwards.....Live at the GBH Boston Public Library Studio

11:00.....Lt. Gov. Driscoll gives remarks at The Mass Black Expo hosted by Black Economy Council of Massachusetts.....Omni Hotel at the Seaport, 450 Summer St., Boston

12:00.....Massachusetts Commission for the Blind Statutory Advisory Board meets. Agenda includes a report from Commissioner John Oliveira and program updates.....Agenda and Livestream

12:00.....Department of Public Utilities hosts a webinar about the pre-filing process for large clean energy infrastructure projects that will be reviewed by the Energy Facilities Siting Board. It's intended for community organizations and municipal staff.....More Info and Zoom

12:00.....MIRA, Massachusetts Advocates for Children, the Justice Center of Southeast Massachusetts and the Health & Law Immigrant Solidarity Network host a conversation on the PROTECT Act's new protections for immigrant communities in schools, child care centers and health care settings, as well as protections for victims of crime and trafficking. The discussion will cover what the law does and doesn't do and what the new protections mean in practice.....Register

1:00.....Sen. Lewis hosts an informational session on the nine questions appearing on Massachusetts' Nov. 3 ballot.....Stoneham Senior Center, 136 Elm St., Stoneham

1:00.....MassTransfer Steering Committee meets. The panel is tasked with supporting pathways for transfer students throughout the public higher education system. Agenda includes a discussion about the Innovation Hub, which the Department of Higher Education uses to pilot strategies to bolster co-ops and pathways from high school to college, as well as integrate non-degree credentials.....Agenda and Zoom

6:00.....MassDOT holds a public hearing about a proposed bridge replacement project in Athol for Main Street over the G&W Railroad.....More Info and Register

6:00.....MassDOT holds a public meeting about the Boston and Albany Corridor Service Development Plan, which will study how to operate passenger rail service. Officials say this is a "critical step towards advancing West-East Rail."....Register

11:00.....The I-93 Tip O'Neill Tunnel southbound will close to all traffic beginning Tuesday at 11 p.m., with plans to reopen to traffic at 5 a.m. Wednesday. "The closure will begin on I-93 southbound at exit 20 (Sullivan Square)," MassDOT said on Oct. 1. "Additional points closed will include access from Route 1 (Tobin Bridge) southbound to I-93 southbound, access from Storrow Drive to I-93 southbound, and all other tunnel on-ramps. Access to I-93 southbound will be maintained from Albany Street. This closure is necessary for crews to safely conduct multiple maintenance activities."....

The Legislature

.....No sessions scheduled.....

Editor's Notes:....

'Energy emergency': Healey moves to blunt soaring heating costs
Exec order expands heating assistance eligibility and temporarily removes two charges from electric bills
Ella Adams

EVERETT, MASS., Oct. 5, 2026.....Gov. Maura Healey declared a "state of energy emergency" Monday as she announced increased home heating assistance for tens of thousands of Bay Staters in the midst of rising oil costs this winter.

Healey said an executive order will also remove the SMART program charge from residential electric bills for three months and cut the Alternative Portfolio Standard charge by 50% this winter.

"One in five households rely on heating oil to heat their homes," Healey said at the Edward G. Connolly Center in Everett, adding that heating oil costs have risen 73% since last year. "Many could pay as much as $700 more for a single fill-up for their tank."

Bay Staters pay some of the highest energy prices in the country and Healey is facing pressure to address that during her reelection campaign, as energy has become a theme in her contest against Republican Mike Minogue. Healey again pointed to the war in Iran as a reason energy costs have risen, blaming the Trump administration.

Healey also said she sent a letter to key members of Congress urging them to provide an additional $3 billion in emergency funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program. The administration said that funding would bring the program up to $7 billion.

Healey's executive order will increase eligibility for the Home Energy Assistance

Program so that families of four earning up to $103,049 could get assistance of $870 to $1,450 for oil or propane this winter, or $600 to $1,000 for gas or electric heat, per the administration.

Under a new heating assistance benefit, families of four making up to $171,749 could get up to $680 off their bill this winter.

Healey did not provide details as to how much her actions will cost the state or where the funding is coming from, but her administration said the plan will lower energy bills for around 85% of ratepayers.

Healey's office said the executive order will allow the administration to cover the costs of expanded heating assistance and removing utility bill charges with money from alternative compliance payments that electricity suppliers make to the state when they do not meet a clean energy quota.

The state is also partnering with the Citizens Energy Corporation to create a new Emergency Winter Warmth Fund to help families struggling with winter heating costs. The fund includes a $100,000 contribution from Citizens Energy Corporation to kick it off, Healey said, standing next to the nonprofit's President Joe Kennedy III, who forecast that "Massachusetts is likely heading into a very difficult winter."

Former congressman Joe Kennedy II founded Citizens Energy Corporation in 1979. The nonprofit has provided discount heating oil to families in need across the country, and has expanded to renewables since its inception. The Healey administration said in a release that contributions to the fund "will be distributed through the existing network of local administering agencies, building on the state's $49 million investment in heating assistance and helping more families receive support this winter."

Lawmakers have been negotiating energy proposals for months — one of the most complex and contentious conferences of the session. Both branches say their bill will save ratepayers billions in long-term savings. The House passed its energy bill (H 5151) in February, proposing to cut the Mass Save energy efficiency program by $1 billion, and the Senate passed its own bill (S 3166) on July 1, proposing instead to phase out the Gas System Enhancement Program.

Healey said "I want to get it done and get it to my desk" when asked about a sense of "urgency" surrounding energy legislation. She said during a Sunday appearance on WCVB's "On the Record," that she's not "waiting" for lawmakers and is "looking for new ways to take charges off of bills."

"I'm looking at ways to provide relief to people right now. Trump's got to end this war. Trump's got to end this war. That's got to be job one right now," Healey said.

Healey last week sent a letter urging the Trump administration to move quickly on the federal reviews and permits required for the expansion of the Algonquin gas pipeline, which she said would lower costs for 600,000 customers. She told reporters Monday that she had not yet heard back.

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Delayed relief helps inflate September tax collections

Colin A. Young

State tax collectors raked in $5.457 billion during September and attributed some of the 18% increase over what was collected last September to Massachusetts's delayed adoption of federal tax changes.

The Department of Revenue said Monday that last month's collections came in $858 million or 18.6% above actual collections from September 2025 and $147 million or 2.8% above the Healey administration's monthly benchmark. Revenue Commissioner Geoffrey Snyder said September's results showed year-over-year increases in withholding and non-withholding income tax, sales tax, and corporate and business tax.

"The increase in withholding was driven, in part, by an increase in collections from firms in the professional, scientific and technical services industry. The increase in non-withholding income tax is mostly driven by an increase in pass-through entity tax (PTET), partially offset by an increase in refunds. The increase in sales tax is due, in part, to typical fluctuations in monthly collections," Snyder said. "The increase in corporate and business tax is due to an increase in estimated and return payments, possibly due to Massachusetts' delayed conformity to the 'One Big Beautiful Bill Act.'"

In June, lawmakers agreed to largely go along with Healey's proposal to delay implementation of the mostly-corporate tax code changes that would have had the greatest impact on state revenues. Healey's administration said allowing changes made in the law that President Donald Trump signed last summer to take effect right away would have led to a $442 million revenue shortfall last fiscal year, and more than $250 million in forgone revenue this fiscal year and next.

Corporate and business tax revenue rose $447 million from September 2025 to September 2026, accounting for 52% of the month's overall $858 million increase. Combined with the $343 million increase in income tax estimated payments, the two categories together account for $790 million or 92% of September's year-over-year growth.

DOR said September is "a significant month for revenues because many individuals and corporations are required to make estimated payments." The third month of the fiscal year calendar generally brings in about 10.2% of annual tax revenue, DOR said.

Through the first quarter of fiscal year 2027, DOR said it has collected $11.7 billion -- $1.617 billion more than at the same checkpoint in fiscal 2026 and $147 million or 1.3% ahead of the benchmark pace the Healey administration sets.

***

State celebrates IT journey from MMARS to Mosaic
Tech chief declares transition to new financial management platform 'amazingly successful'
Alison Kuznitz

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, Oct. 5, 2026.....What started as a governmental turf war about eight years ago to overhaul the state's financial management infrastructure culminated in a celebratory lunch and cake-cutting ceremony Monday.

Alongside technology and professional services firm CGI, the state earlier this year launched Mosaic, a cloud-based financial management platform that replaced the antiquated Massachusetts Management Accounting & Reporting System.

"When the state invests in technology, overwhelmingly it's for projects that directly serve residents in one way or another, because that's where the focus is. Mosaic is an exception," Comptroller William McNamara told the News Service. "This is how the state gets its own work done, pays its own bills, does its accounting, manages its financials, and keeps them safe from fraud and cybersecurity risk."

Mosaic is used by more than 150 departments throughout the state for financial accounting and transactions processes, according to a McNamara spokesperson. District attorneys, sheriffs, state universities and community colleges also use the platform, the comptroller said.

The platform brings Massachusetts into the "modern cybersecurity world" and features an improved user experience, which McNamara said will make it easier to train future state financial professionals. He said the old system was "secure" but had reached a point where it "couldn't be updated anymore," including for federal tax policy changes.

The state is still working to replace the outdated Human Resources/Compensation Management System, with both upgrade projects included in the multi-year Business Enterprise Systems Transformation (BEST) Program. Capital costs for the program totaled nearly $87 million from fiscal 2023 through 2026, according to the comptroller's office.

Former Comptroller Thomas Shack and former Administration and Finance Secretary Michael Heffernan clashed in 2018 over which office would be in charge of the system overhauls. Shack, the state's independent fiscal watchdog, said the administration withheld money for the project as it pushed for the comptroller to work with ANF and the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security.

"So if I were to simply say, 'yes, I'll partner with ANF or TSS or the executive,' then now I'm subjecting the apolitical and independent comptroller's office to a political arm of government," Shack had said.

The tension led to Shack's offer to resign. Heffernan attended Monday's event, as well as former comptrollers William Kilmartin and Marty Benison.

McNamara described himself, Technology and Services Secretary Jason Snyder, and Administration and Finance Secretary Matt Gorzkowicz as co-sponsors of the first phase of the BEST program.

"I often say a measure of a great partnership is not whether you'll have problems, but how you resolve the problems when they happen," said Sandy Maloney of CGI's Boston business unit. "So when it mattered most, this team came together for the shared goal. There was trust, transparency and a willingness to work together."

Snyder said the project's outcome has been "amazingly positive."

"The feedback is off the charts," Snyder said. "This is a project that has been amazingly successful."

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DA candidate would re-try Clancy, but not for first degree murder
Colin A. Young

Rep. Chris Markey, a Democrat running to be district attorney in Bristol County, said Friday during a debate that he would re-try Lindsay Clancy but would not bring another first degree murder charge against her, were he to face the decision that Plymouth District Attorney Tim Cruz does.

Clancy, a Duxbury mother who killed her three children before attempting suicide in 2023, gained nationwide attention and triggered discussions about access to maternal mental healthcare. Clancy's defense didn't deny she killed her three children, but argued she faced postpartum psychosis at the time and she had repeatedly sought treatment for mental health challenges. The jury did not reach a unanimous verdict and the judge declared a mistrial on Sept. 4. Cruz, the DA in Plymouth County, must decide whether to try Clancy again on first degree murder, a lesser charge or not at all.

"I think this is a case that is purely mental health ... I would say what I would do with that particular case is probably charge her with second-degree murder, focus on the mental health issues, then have a judge make a determination as to the criminal responsibility of Miss Clancy," Markey, of Dartmouth, said during a debate hosted by WPRI-TV. "And then at that point -- again, part of this problem is the perception that she's going to be released if she doesn't get found guilty of first-degree murder. She's not. She's going to go in a hospital and she's going to be there for a very long, long, long time, and maybe the rest of her life. Most likely, the rest of her life."

On the Clancy case, Markey was in agreement with his Republican opponent, Seth Aitken of Swansea, who is the first Republican to run to be Bristol County's top prosecutor in more than 50 years. Aitken said he "would be inclined to recharge the case, but I probably wouldn't bring a first-degree murder charge in the way that it was brought the first time."

Markey and Aitken were in agreement on other topics as well: both said they would vote to keep marijuana legal, both will vote against the ballot question that would allow public defenders to unionize, and both said they oppose legislative efforts to move 18-year-olds out of adult court and into Juvenile Court jurisdiction. Aitken said he will vote to repeal the state's 2024 gun law, while Markey said he will vote to keep it but "would like to see it repealed in many respects."

Markey is running for the DA seat that Thomas Quinn is vacating. During Friday's debate, he called himself "the district attorney you would want if your child was ever the victim of a crime, but I'm also the thoughtful, fair-minded district attorney you would want if your child was ever accused of a crime."

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Guv steps in again as Brigham nurses near an indefinite strike
Ella Adams

Gov. Maura Healey on Monday urged one of the state's biggest healthcare employers to "reopen negotiations now" with nurses ahead of an anticipated strike set to begin Oct. 14 at Mass General Brigham.

"Yes. I've been clear with both parties. Get back to the table. MGB needs to open discussions, open negotiations, and get back to the table," Healey told reporters in Everett when asked if she's involved in any talks. "Our healthcare workers need to be treated fairly."

Nearly 4,000 Brigham and Women's Hospital nurses plan to start the strike unless they reach a contract deal with Mass General Brigham leadership. They want cost of living increases, affordable health insurance, limits on the use of temporary travel nurses and protections around patient care. MGB says nurses receive annual raises and that the system proposed a new increase for nurses at the top step of their wage scale.

"I don't want to see people out on strike," Healey continued. "MGB needs to reopen negotiations now."

Nurses authorized an indefinite strike last week, and the Massachusetts Nurses Association said it submitted the required 10-day notice for an "unfair labor practice" strike to MGB.

A five-day work stoppage in July did not break the contract negotiation stalemate. Healey at the time met privately with MGB and MNA leaders in an unsuccessful attempt to prevent nurses from walking off the job.

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Senate Session Summary - Monday, Oct. 5, 2026
State House News Service

The Senate advanced local bills on Monday, continuing to move small matters while Democrats remain at odds over the final details of omnibus bills. Most lawmakers are in their districts or out on the campaign trail. Sen. Jamie Eldridge is petitioning to authorize the MWRA to supply water to the town of Wayland. A fight is brewing over an MWRA transfer request for more water from the Quabbin and Wachusett reservoirs to bring additional communities onto their system. The Senate meets again on Thursday, without mention of any planned roll calls. - Sam Drysdale

CONVENES: The Senate convened at 11:19 a.m., with Sen. Jehlen presiding and Sen. Fattman present.

PLEDGE: Senators and guests rose to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

WAYLAND MWRA: The Senate referred to the Joint Committee on Environment and Natural Resources a Sen. Eldridge petition SD 4240 authorizing the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority to supply water to the town of Wayland.

SICK LEAVE: The Senate concurred with the House in referring HD 6355 establishing a sick leave bank for Carry Shulock-Sexton, an employee of the department of agricultural resources to the Joint Committee on Public Service.

HOLBROOK FIREFIGHTER: The Senate enacted S 3165 authorizing the town of Holbrook to appoint Patrick Doherty as a firefighter notwithstanding the maximum age requirement.

FALMOUTH LAND: The Senate enacted H 5108 acquisition and disposition of certain land in the town of Falmouth.

OXFORD CHARTER: The Senate enacted H 5261 amending the town charter in the town of Oxford.

UPTON FIRE CHIEF: The Senate enacted H 5389 authorizing the continued employment of Michael Marchand, the fire chief in the town of Upton.

RECESS: The Senate recessed at 11:22 a.m. and returned at 11:23 a.m.

ORDERS OF THE DAY: There were no objections to proceeding with items contained within the Orders of the Day.

BERLIN SELECT BOARD: The Senate engrossed S 2626 relative to the Select Board of the town of Berlin.

DIGHTON POLICE: The Senate adopted a Sen. Dooner amendment to S 2939 appointment of retired police officers as special police officers in Dighton, then ordered it as amended to a third reading, under a new number, S 3275.

DIGHTON POLICE: The Senate engrossed S 3275 authorizing the appointment of retired police officers as special police officers in the town of Dighton.

HOPKINTON BRIDGE: The Senate engrossed H 3608 designating a certain bridge in the town of Hopkinton as the Major General Frank D. Merrill memorial bridge.

BERLIN RECALL: The Senate engrossed H 3896 providing for recall elections in the town of Berlin.

AUBURN TAXES: The Senate engrossed H 4754 expanded small property tax abatements in the town of Auburn.

GRAFTON TAX EXEMPTION: The Senate engrossed H 5035 relative to Grafton's senior tax exemption.

TIME OF MEETING: On a Sen. Fattman order, the Senate scheduled its next meeting for Thursday at 11 a.m.

MEMORIAL ADJOURNMENT: On a request from Sen. Collins, the Senate agreed to adjourn in memory of Larry Dwyer Jr. and Joseph Lee Sr.

ADJOURNS: The Senate adjourned at 11:30 a.m. to meet next on Thursday at 11 a.m.

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House Session Summary - Monday, Oct. 5, 2026
State House News Service

With less than a month before the election, the House continued its streak of acting only on local matters while several major bills have been tied up in negotiations for more than two months. The House sent bills dealing with Upton, Oxford and Holbrook to the governor's desk. The House also enacted a bill allowing Falmouth to acquire and dispose with about 139 acres of land to be used for a solar energy generating facility, according to the Joint Committee on Municipalities and Regional Government's bill summary. The House meets again on Thursday. -- Katie Castellani

CONVENES: The House convened at 11 a.m. with Rep. Donato of Medford

presiding.

PLEDGE: Representatives, guests and staff rose to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

RESOLUTIONS: The House adopted two resolutions. One from Reps. Fiola of Fall River, Ouellette of Westport, Silvia of Fall River and Scanlon of North Attleborough congratulating a resident on their 100th birthday, and another from Reps. Owens of Watertown and Lawn of Watertown congratulating a resident on achieving the rank of Eagle Scout.

SLB – DEPT. OF MENTAL HEALTH: The House referred to the Committee on Public Service HD 6371 establishing a sick leave bank for Gina Dellagatta, an employee of the department of mental health.

STOW DIGITAL NOTICES: The House ordered to a third reading H 5603 authorizing "print-free" digital legal notices for the town of Stow.

SLB – DEPT. OF CORRECTION: The House ordered to a third reading H 5677 establishing a sick leave bank for David Gilman, an employee of the department of correction.

HOLBROOK FIREFIGHTER AGE: The House enacted S 3165 authorizing the town of Holbrook to appoint Patrick Doherty as a firefighter notwithstanding the maximum age requirement

FALMOUTH LAND: The House enacted H 5108 acquisition and disposition of certain land in the town of Falmouth.

OXFORD CHARTER: The House enacted H 5261 amending the town charter in the town of Oxford.

UPTON FIRE CHIEF: The House enacted H 5389 authorizing the continued employment of Michael Marchand, the fire chief in the town of Upton.

ORDERS OF THE DAY: Rep. Donato said there were no objections to proceeding with the Orders of the Day.

BOYLSTON EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT: The House engrossed S 3088 authorizing a certain employment contract for the town of Boylston.

ADJOURNS: The House adopted a Speaker Mariano of Quincy order to meet next on Thursday at 11 a.m. and adjourned at 11:07 a.m. with plans to meet again on Thursday at 11 a.m. in an informal session.

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Campaign Notebook: Minogue's Big Spend | Ballot Q Tour | Healey on Tax Rebates
State House News Service

... A September spending surge has reduced Republican Mike Minogue's gubernatorial campaign coffers to about $1.5 million heading into the final month of his election matchup with Democrat Maura Healey, only enough cash for about a week of spending at last month's pace. The Republican's September bank report,

filed Friday with the Office of Campaign and Political Finance, shows that he spent $6.1 million last month as he took in about $1.8 million -- by far the most the candidate has spent in a month and also his best month for contributions since March. Minogue has largely self-funded his campaign for governor and the latest look at his campaign trail accounting does not detail the source of his September receipts. Most of the campaign's expenditures appear to have gone towards advertising, including about $4.9 million to political media placement firm AxMedia. Minogue has carpeted airwaves with ads promoting his gas tax holiday plan and a donut-themed scene encouraging voters to try someone new. There was also a $40,000 payment to the firm POOLHOUSE, which is run by former Mitt Romney and Scott Brown aide Will Ritter. Minogue's campaign warchest was stuffed to start May, just over $10 million. It has dropped 85% to about $1.5 million in five months, a span during which the campaign spent $13.33 million and took in $4.76 million. Healey's campaign filed its OCPF report for September just after 11 a.m. Monday. She had about $6.8 million on hand going into September and had been spending less than $250,000 a month since May. Last month, her campaign reported, Healey spent about $4.1 million while taking in about $3.5 million. The Democratic State Committee's report also shows that it paid Archipelago Strategies about $95,000 for ad production and a media buy on Healey's behalf last month ... -- Colin A. Young

... He's not on the ballot himself, but outgoing Sen. Jason Lewis isn't taking election season off. The Winchester Democrat, who is not running for reelection after almost 18 years in the Legislature, announced he will hold a series of information sessions at senior centers around his district to help voters make sense of the nine ballot questions they will be asked to weigh in on when they vote in the Nov. 3 election. "To help keep you informed and ensure you know exactly what you're voting for, we've created this short guide (also available online) to summarize what your vote means for each question," Lewis wrote in a newsletter sent out by his Senate office. This week, Lewis will visit the Malden, Stoneham and Wakefield senior centers, followed by Reading and Melrose the week after. "I will not be campaigning for or against the questions; these sessions are purely informational. Stop by if you'd like to learn more and ask me questions about the initiatives," the senator wrote. Lewis also suggested voters scour Secretary of State Bill Galvin's official voter guide, and the ballot question analysis done by the Center for State Policy Analysis at Tufts University ... -- Colin A. Young

... Gov. Maura Healey was clear about her opposition to the since-stricken ballot initiative to reduce the state income tax rate, but she was far less direct when asked for her position on Question 5 to limit state tax collections and potentially fuel more frequent taxpayer rebates. "Yeah, I support 62F. In fact, in 2022, I stood for getting those checks out to people. That money belongs to the taxpayers," Healey said on WCVB-TV's "On The Record," referring to the chapter of state law mandated almost $3 million in tax rebates during Gov. Charlie Baker's final year in office. Question 5 would amend Chapter 62F and could make rebates like those paid in 1987 and 2022 more common. Healey added, "So, you know, the way I look at it now, we also have to take account of what those revenue sources are funding. The voters need to take a look at this and understand we're talking about funding for schools and roads, police and fire departments. So you know this is something I think that everybody's got to account for. But I've always supported 62F." When co-host Sharman Sacchetti asked Healey for a yes or no answer on Question 5, the governor did not give one. "You know, I think that this is a challenging one right now because of what our taxes are actually funding. You know, look, and I say that as somebody -- I'm the first governor to cut taxes in 20 years," Healey said. "So I'm always looking for ways to provide tax

relief to people. But we'll see what the voters do." If it survives talks with the House, Healey this year could also see on her desk a Senate-approved economic development bill rider that would require that Chapter 62F rebates only be triggered if state tax revenue in a given fiscal year is equal to 7.5% or more of the total statewide personal income reported for that year. Healey also told "On The Record" that she will vote no on Question 8, the effort to essentially outlaw the legal marijuana industry. "We've got to keep recreational marijuana here in Massachusetts. It's an important industry, the cannabis industry, and I hope the voters keep cannabis," she said. In 2016, Attorney General Healey co-led the opposition to marijuana legalization ... -- Colin A. Young

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'Energy emergency': Healey moves to blunt soaring heating costs
Exec order expands heating assistance eligibility and temporarily removes two charges from electric bills
Ella Adams

EVERETT, MASS., Oct. 5, 2026.....Gov. Maura Healey declared a "state of energy emergency" Monday as she announced increased home heating assistance for tens of thousands of Bay Staters in the midst of rising oil costs this winter.

Healey said an executive order will also remove the SMART program charge from residential electric bills for three months and cut the Alternative Portfolio Standard charge by 50% this winter.

"One in five households rely on heating oil to heat their homes," Healey said at the Edward G. Connolly Center in Everett, adding that heating oil costs have risen 73% since last year. "Many could pay as much as $700 more for a single fill-up for their tank."

Bay Staters pay some of the highest energy prices in the country and Healey is facing pressure to address that during her reelection campaign, as energy has become a theme in her contest against Republican Mike Minogue. Healey again pointed to the war in Iran as a reason energy costs have risen, blaming the Trump administration.

Healey also said she sent a letter to key members of Congress urging them to provide an additional $3 billion in emergency funding for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program. The administration said that funding would bring the program up to $7 billion.

Healey's executive order will increase eligibility for the Home Energy Assistance Program so that families of four earning up to $103,049 could get assistance of $870 to $1,450 for oil or propane this winter, or $600 to $1,000 for gas or electric heat, per the administration.

Under a new heating assistance benefit, families of four making up to $171,749 could get up to $680 off their bill this winter.

Healey did not provide details as to how much her actions will cost the state or where the funding is coming from, but her administration said the plan will lower energy bills for around 85% of ratepayers.

Healey's office said the executive order will allow the administration to cover the costs of expanded heating assistance and removing utility bill charges with money from alternative compliance payments that electricity suppliers make to the state when they do not meet a clean energy quota.

The state is also partnering with the Citizens Energy Corporation to create a new Emergency Winter Warmth Fund to help families struggling with winter heating costs. The fund includes a $100,000 contribution from Citizens Energy Corporation to kick it off, Healey said, standing next to the nonprofit's President Joe Kennedy III, who forecast that "Massachusetts is likely heading into a very difficult winter."

Former congressman Joe Kennedy II founded Citizens Energy Corporation in 1979. The nonprofit has provided discount heating oil to families in need across the country, and has expanded to renewables since its inception. The Healey administration said in a release that contributions to the fund "will be distributed through the existing network of local administering agencies, building on the state's $49 million investment in heating assistance and helping more families receive support this winter."

Lawmakers have been negotiating energy proposals for months — one of the most complex and contentious conferences of the session. Both branches say their bill will save ratepayers billions in long-term savings. The House passed its energy bill (H 5151) in February, proposing to cut the Mass Save energy efficiency program by $1 billion, and the Senate passed its own bill (S 3166) on July 1, proposing instead to phase out the Gas System Enhancement Program.

Healey said "I want to get it done and get it to my desk" when asked about a sense of "urgency" surrounding energy legislation. She said during a Sunday appearance on WCVB's "On the Record," that she's not "waiting" for lawmakers and is "looking for new ways to take charges off of bills."

"I'm looking at ways to provide relief to people right now. Trump's got to end this war. Trump's got to end this war. That's got to be job one right now," Healey said.

Healey last week sent a letter urging the Trump administration to move quickly on the federal reviews and permits required for the expansion of the Algonquin gas pipeline, which she said would lower costs for 600,000 customers. She told reporters Monday that she had not yet heard back.

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Baker joins Patrick in bipartisan all-party primary support
Michael P. Norton

They ran against each other in 2010. They each served two terms as governor. They led their parties. And now they are both supporting a ballot question that strips Democrats and Republicans of guaranteed candidates in general elections.

The Yes on 3 campaign announced Monday that former Republican Gov. Charlie Baker has joined former Democratic Gov. Deval Patrick in endorsing the election reform. Patrick's lieutenant governor, Tim Murray, is also on board.

"The opportunity to hold public office is a tremendous privilege, but even greater

than that honor is the profound responsibility it carries to serve the community that elected you, regardless of party politics," Baker said in a statement. "As governor, I worked hard to listen to different points of view because that's the only way for leaders to find the best ideas and reach common ground to get important stuff done. Massachusetts is at its best when we put good ideas and good government ahead of politics, because the real work begins after campaigns end."

Despite his electoral success here, Baker late in his second term and since fell out of favor within some corners of the Republican Party as it shifted its own abacus before and during President Donald Trump's second term.

The Massachusetts Democratic Party and the Massachusetts Republican Party both oppose Question 3, which has drawn support from former Republican Lt. Gov. Kerry Healey and former MassGOP Chair Jennifer Nassour as well as Democrat Auditor Diana DiZoglio, former State Treasurer and MassDems Chair Steve Grossman and former U.S. Rep. Joe Kennedy III, a Democrat.

"All-party primaries will give voters more choice and our elected officials will have to reach across the aisle to voters from other parties if they want to be successful. That's why I believe Question 3 will return the focus to what matters most: delivering meaningful results for the people of our Commonwealth," said Baker.

Added Patrick: "Politics nowadays is less about 'red' versus 'blue' than about insiders versus outsiders. Elections ought to be a competition of ideas, experience and character than about who has the better structural advantage. All-party primaries can enable more good people to compete, and encourage more office holders to deliver results once elected."

The Yes on 3 campaign says the reform, which would require all candidates to compete in a single primary with the top two vote-getters advancing, would end "convention gatekeeping," whereby candidates must secure the support of 15% of delegates during election-year party conventions. That requirement derailed the 2022 gubernatorial campaign of Danielle Allen, who had hoped to challenge Maura Healey for the Democratic nomination.

Democrat House Speaker Ron Mariano last month called the proposal "ridiculous" while Senate President Karen Spilka, also a Democrat, said she has "concerns about it, that those with the most money will be the ones coming out on top."

Democratic Party Chair Steve Kerrigan has also claimed that Question 3 will make primary elections more about money.

"It becomes what everybody talks about: these smoke-filled back rooms of folks start putting their thumb on the scale in September for candidates, and then in order for a party or party activists to try to push one person or another, it becomes a money primary only, and not an activist primary," Kerrigan said.

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Business confidence held in negative territory in September
Michael P. Norton

Business confidence ticked upwards among Massachusetts employers in September

but sentiment remained in negative territory and torn between the impacts of growth and rising costs.

In its last snapshot before the elections, Associated Industries of Massachusetts' monthly index rose by 1.2 points to 48.6. The index has been in positive territory -- 50 or above -- for just three of this year's first nine months.

"Employer attitudes continue to reflect a tug-of-war between an economy that is growing at a moderate pace and rising costs and other issues that are affecting profitability," AIM said.

Sub-indexes shows varying business confidence levels. Confidence among employers in their own operations rose 2.9 points to 53.3; the Massachusetts Index assessing conditions within the state lost 1.7 points to 44.7; and the US Index measuring conditions nationwide declined 0.8 points to 38.6. The future index was nearly unchanged at 45.9.

"Hiring is considerably slower than during the post-pandemic expansion," Olena Staveley-O'Carroll, economics professor at the College of the Holy Cross and a member of AIM's Board of Economic Advisors, said in a statement. "Businesses appear reluctant to make large layoffs, but they also aren't adding workers at the elevated rates seen earlier in the recovery, while declining quit rates suggest workers are becoming more cautious."

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Advances - A Look at the Week of Oct. 4, 2026
State House News Service

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, Oct. 2, 2026.....With Election Day just over a month away, the actual election is getting started already with many mail-in voters beginning to receive and cast ballots. The voting is happening for the most part without the level of public debates between statewide candidates that voters have become accustomed to over the years, and with a heavier emphasis this election cycle on social media ads that are running in tandem with TV ads for the candidates who can afford those. Voters will get one top-tier debate next week: Democrat Maura Healey and Republican Mike Minogue will meet for their first tête-à-tête of the campaign Thursday on WBZ-TV. Affordability and competitiveness are two of this year's top concerns for voters and candidates, and the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation this week released annual index results that feature material that incumbents can spin to their advantages, as well as fodder for challengers. "Massachusetts is still #1 in the nation for educational attainment and health care quality, ranks 2nd in GSP per capita and wages, and moved into the top ten for poverty rate for the first time," MTF said. "At the same time, labor force growth fell from 10th to 39th, unemployment rose to 4.8 percent, and the state ranks at or near the bottom on childcare, energy and housing costs. Residents see the same picture: 55% rate the state below average on affordability, and 40% of 18-29 year olds expect to leave within five years." Average weekly wages rose 4.8% to $1,818, and the state ranks third nationally in venture capital investment and NIH grants. At the same time, energy costs ranked 47th among the states, business formation ranked 49th and Massachusetts dropped 29 spots in labor force growth due to reductions in international migration and residents leaving. That's the backdrop as voting ramps up and with possible solutions to some of those problems bogging out on Beacon

Hill. The Legislature hasn't been truly active since July as Democrats appear to be putting elections and campaigns above completing work on 12 substantial bills that have cleared the House and Senate in differing forms but remain unfinished. While economic development and energy affordability accords would give incumbents some juice for their campaigns, it's looking more each day like Democrats may wait until after the election to reach compromises on the vast majority of bills pending before conference committees. That approach would keep them from taking pre-election votes that could draw voter attention, for good or ill, and let them gauge the public mood before making final decisions. Spending, lobbying and debates on the people's agenda as reflected in nine ballot questions also continues this week with three public forums. One on Question 4 and Election Day registration is planned for Wednesday in Worcester. On Thursday, a forum on Question 9 and the 2024 firearms law is scheduled in Amherst, and one on Question 7 and housing production is up for discussion in Salem. Also on Thursday, MASSterList and the State House News Service host "Healthcare Cost Crunch: Understanding Drivers and Designing Solutions in Mass," bringing together some of the top voices in the field at the UMass Club in downtown Boston.

Saturday, Oct. 3, 2026

ARTICLE V CONVENTION CONFERENCE: Former New Hampshire Gov. Chris Sununu joins Harvard Law scholar Lawrence Lessig for a fireside chat on the second day of a conference on amending the U.S. Constitution through an Article V convention called by the states. Former U.S. Sen. Russell Feingold sits on a panel making the case against a convention, which will cover risks and fears of a "runaway" convention. Five panels examine the history of Article V, possible amendment proposals, arguments against a convention, state and international convention models, and what a convention in 2030 might look like. Lessig closes the day in conversation with convention skeptic Laurence Tribe, followed by closing remarks from Lessig and lawyer Michael Farris. (Saturday, Oct. 3, 9 a.m., Wasserstein Hall, Harvard Law School, Cambridge | Register | Schedule)

LABOR RALLY: Gov. Healey, Lt. Gov. Driscoll, U.S. Sen. Markey and Treasurer Goldberg -- all Democrats facing reelection next month -- hold a rally with labor officials a month before Election Day. Other speakers include Massachusetts AFL-CIO President Chrissy Lynch, 1199SEIU President Yvonne Armstrong, SEIU 32BJ Executive Vice President Kevin Brown, Massachusetts Building Trades President Frank Callahan and IBEW Local 103 Business Manager Lou Antonellis. Location was not provided; media asked to RSVP to kerry@maurahealey.com for precise location. Democratic campaigns regularly host labor rallies at the IBEW hall on Neponset Street in Dorchester. (Saturday, Oct. 3, 10 a.m., Dorchester)

SERENITY GARDEN: Boston Mayor Wu attends a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Steven P. Odom Serenity Garden, a new park next to the Morton Station Village housing development in Mattapan. The park is named in honor of a 13-year-old Dorchester resident who died in a gun violence accident. (Saturday, Oct. 3., 10:30 a.m., 23 Hopkins St., Dorchester)

ARMENIAN FESTIVAL: Congressman McGovern attends the Armenian Fall Festival. (Saturday, Oct. 3, 12:30 p.m. 87 Salisbury St., Worcester)

ELDER SERVICES: Central Boston Elder Services hosts its annual Care Unites Us Gala, a fundraiser for the organization that serves 12,000 older adults and people

with disabilities each month. Attorney General Campbell will be honored, alongside two Boston Police officers. Jim Brett, CEO of The New England Council, gives the keynote address. (Saturday, Oct. 3, 6:30 p.m., Westin Copley Place, America Ballroom, 10 Huntington Ave., Boston)

Sunday, Oct. 4, 2026

DEATON ON KELLER: Jon Keller talks with U.S. Senate candidate John Deaton about differences between him and Sen. Ed Markey, and his positions on the war with Iran and health care reform. (Sunday, 8:30 a.m., WBZ-TV)

GOLDBERG, DIONNE ON NBC: NBC 10 reporter Matt Prichard dives into the state treasurer's race, speaking with Treasurer Goldberg and Republican challenger Elizabeth Dionne on the network's weekly "@ ISSUE" segment. (Sunday, 9:30 a.m., NBC 10)

HEALEY ON THE RECORD: Gov. Maura Healey joins WCVB's weekly political talk show "On the Record." (Sunday, 11 a.m., WCVB-TV)
Monday, Oct. 5, 2026

FLEET DAY: AltWheels Fleet Day brings together corporate and municipal fleet leaders, policymakers and clean transportation innovators. The event will explore fleet electrification, alternative fuels, EV infrastructure and micromobility. (Monday, 8 a.m., Four Points by Sheraton Norwood, Norwood | Register)

HARVARD LAWSUITS: Harvard students, faculty, researchers, alumni and other leaders speak at a press conference outside the Moakley Federal District Courthouse, coinciding with two days of arguments as the federal government appeals in two cases that the university filed and won. The lawsuits involved federal funding freezes to Harvard and attempts to block the enrollment of international students. "Speakers will address the importance of these two cases to the future of academic freedom and institutional independence at Harvard and in U.S. higher education as a whole," organizers say. (Monday, 8:30 a.m., 1 Courthouse Way, Boston)

MUNICIPAL PARTNERSHIPS CONFERENCE: Lt. Gov. Driscoll delivers the keynote address at the Statewide Municipal Partnerships Conference, hosted by the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies and the Division of Local Services. The half-day conference brings together municipal and regional officials from across the state, with breakout sessions on siting new technology, housing innovations, regional public health, municipal AI and cybersecurity, and municipal finance. (Monday, 9 a.m., Hogan Campus Center, College of the Holy Cross, Worcester | More Info and Register)

SJC: Supreme Judicial Court hears arguments in six cases, including defendants who were not able to appear at previous trials due to federal immigration enforcement actions. (Monday, 9 a.m., John Adams Courthouse, Room 1, 1 Pemberton Square, Boston | More Info and Livestream)

OUT-OF-NETWORK COSTS: Division of Insurance holds a third listening session on setting a default out-of-network payment rate, focused on consumer protections and network impacts. Regulators say they're looking for strategies to protect people from unexpected out-of-network costs, plus potential implications surrounding access and care utilization. (Monday, 10 a.m. | More Info and Access)

HEALTHCARE PRICES: U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services, Labor, and Treasury host an event to announce joint efforts to "strengthen healthcare price transparency and make cost information easier to access, compare, and use." (Monday, 10:45 a.m., Hubert Humphrey Building, Great Hall, 200 Independence Ave, S.W., Washington, D.C.)

HOUSE: House meets in an informal session. (Monday, 11 a.m., House Chamber)

SENATE: Senate meets without a calendar. (Monday, 11 a.m., Senate Chamber)

RED SOX SEASON-CAPPING PRESSER: Boston Red Sox President & CEO Sam Kennedy, Chief Baseball Officer Craig Breslow and Manager Chad Tracy hold an "end of season" press conference after the New York Yankees easily defeated Boston in a two-game wildcard series this week. Pro sports are a major economic driver in Massachusetts and player earnings also lead to income surtax revenues from high earners, though some fans would like to see the teams compete by signing more superstars who command the highest wages. (Monday, 11 a.m., Level M Media Interview Room, Fenway Park)

SENATE PROJECT: U.S. Senators Katie Britt (R-AL) and Peter Welch (D-VT) participate in The Senate Project conversation series, moderated by FOX News Channel's Martha MacCallum. The discussion will focus on bipartisan collaboration, including efforts on social media, and youth mental health and forecasting water-related disasters. (Monday, 11 a.m., Edward M. Kennedy Institute, Boston | FOX News, More Info)

COMPTROLLER CELEBRATION: Office of the Comptroller hosts a celebration for the launch of Mosaic, the state's new financial application. (Monday, 11 a.m., Great Hall)

ANTI-SCHOLARSHIP TAX CREDIT RALLY: Dozens of Massachusetts education, civil rights, parent and community organizations launch a statewide coalition opposing Massachusetts' participation in a new federal scholarship tax credit program. The program provides tax credits to donors who contribute to scholarship-granting organizations that can provide funds for students to attend private schools. Coalition members will urge Gov. Healey to opt out of the program, which is set to begin Jan. 1, 2027. Support has come from Republican lawmakers and gubernatorial candidate Mike Minogue, the Pioneer Institute, and from former Lt. Gov. Tim Murray and the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce. Opposition has come from teachers' unions and the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents. At least 27 other states have opted in. (Monday, 1 p.m., Room 350)

ALLSTON POST OFFICE: Congresswoman Pressley, Boston Mayor Wu and Boston City Council President Liz Breadon host a press conference on the Postal Service's plan to not reopen the Allston branch. "This decision is an unacceptable reversal of a promise made to the Allston community by USPS," Breadon said in a statement. "For the past seven years, the 87,000 residents of Allston-Brighton have been served by only one post office location; Newton, which has a population of 88,000, has 10. Our neighborhood will continue to fight for fair treatment from USPS and the fulfillment of commitments made." Developer Eden Properties said the U.S. Postal Service reneged on a plan to reopen the location, The Boston Globe reported in April. For the press conference address, contact Malaya.Hayes@boston.gov. (Monday, 4 p.m., Allston)

CAMBRIDGE CIVIC ASSEMBLY: Cambridge hosts a public lottery event to select 40 residents who will serve on the Civic Assembly, a new community engagement process to guide the future of public safety and surveillance technology in the city. City officials said 15,000 randomly selected Cambridge households received mailed invitations during the week of Sept. 7. (Monday, 5 p.m., Cambridge City Hall, Sullivan Chamber, 795 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge)

SEPTEMBER REVENUES: Department of Revenue is due to report on state tax collections in September, which DOR considers a "significant" month for state revenues. By mid-September, DOR had collected $3.177 billion, which is $749 million or 30.8% more than during the same period of September 2025. DOR has set September's monthly collection benchmark at $5.31 billion, which would be about $711 million more than last September. (Monday)

Tuesday, Oct. 6, 2026

FCC COMMISSIONER: FCC Commissioner Anna Gomez participates in a conversation about the First Amendment alongside Dartmouth College professor Brendan Nyhan. They'll discuss free speech, a free press and the Federal Communications Commission's role in the communications landscape. The event is hosted by the New England First Amendment Coalition and the Nackey S. Loeb School of Communications. (Tuesday, 8:30 a.m., New Hampshire Institute of Politics at Saint Anselm College | Register)

MASS BLACK EXPO: Black Economic Council of Massachusetts hosts the Mass Black Expo, which showcases businesses, organizations and "allies committed to building a more equitable economy." Attorney General Campbell gives the keynote address, and U.S. Sen. Markey speaks. Attendees will learn about new pathways for business growth, entrepreneurship and wealth creation. The event runs through 6:30 p.m. (Tuesday, 9 a.m., Omni Boston Hotel, 450 Summer St., Boston, Seaport | Register)

PUBLIC SAFETY AND HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE: Deadline to submit written testimony to Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security on a Rep. Moakley bill (H 5588) that would designate the regional lockup, which is operated by the Dukes County sheriff, as part of the jail. (Tuesday, 9 a.m. | More Info

GAMING COMMISSION: Massachusetts Gaming Commission holds a hearing on proposed regulations dealing with public or private transfers of interests in gaming licenses and sports wagering licenses. (Tuesday, 9:30 a.m. | More Info)

DISABILITY INCLUSION: In honor of Disability Employment Awareness Month, Massachusetts Apprentice Network hosts a virtual event about how employers can intentionally recruit, hire and train individuals with disabilities through apprenticeships and other early talent pathways. Speakers include Becky Jackson Curran of Disability:IN, Rick Laferriere of CVS Health, Jamell Mitchell of EY and Michael Tamasi of AccuRounds. (Tuesday, 10 a.m. | Register)

BLOOD DRIVE: Sen. Driscoll and the American Red Cross of Massachusetts host blood drive through 3:30 p.m. People can make an appointment or drop in. (Tuesday, 10:30 a.m., Great Hall | Register)

LEWIS BALLOT QUESTION SESSION: Sen. Lewis hosts an informational session

on the nine questions appearing on Massachusetts' Nov. 3 ballot. The session is intended to provide voters with information about what a "yes" or "no" vote would mean on each question. (Tuesday, 11 a.m., Malden Senior Center, 7 Washington St., Malden)

COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND: Massachusetts Commission for the Blind Statutory Advisory Board meets. Agenda includes a report from Commissioner John Oliveira and program updates. (Tuesday, 12 p.m. | Agenda and Livestream)

CLEAN ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE: Department of Public Utilities hosts a webinar about the pre-filing process for large clean energy infrastructure projects that will be reviewed by the Energy Facilities Siting Board. It's intended for community organizations and municipal staff. (Tuesday, 12 p.m. | More Info and Zoom)

PROTECT ACT: MIRA, Massachusetts Advocates for Children, the Justice Center of Southeast Massachusetts and the Health & Law Immigrant Solidarity Network host a conversation on the PROTECT Act's new protections for immigrant communities in schools, child care centers and health care settings, as well as protections for victims of crime and trafficking. The discussion will cover what the law does and doesn't do and what the new protections mean in practice. (Tuesday, 12 p.m. | Register)

LEWIS BALLOT QUESTION SESSION: Sen. Lewis hosts an informational session on the nine questions appearing on Massachusetts' Nov. 3 ballot. (Tuesday, 1 p.m., Stoneham Senior Center, 136 Elm St., Stoneham)

MASSTRANSFER STEERING COMMITTEE: MassTransfer Steering Committee meets. The panel is tasked with supporting pathways for transfer students throughout the public higher education system. Agenda includes a discussion about the Innovation Hub, which the Department of Higher Education uses to pilot strategies to bolster co-ops and pathways from high school to college, as well as integrate non-degree credentials. (Tuesday, 1 p.m. | Agenda and Zoom)

MICROELECTRONICS FACILITY: Gov. Healey attends the groundbreaking ceremony for the Draper Integrated Microelectronics Production & Advanced Chip Technology Center, an 11,000-square-foot building featuring advanced microelectronic design, production and packing facilities. The technology will support Draper's U.S. defense, aerospace and government customers. Other attendees include Gov. Healey, Lt. Gov. Driscoll, U.S. Rep. Trahan, UMass President Marty Meehan, UMass Lowell Chancellor Julie Chen and Lowell Mayor Erik Gitschier. (Tuesday, 2 p.m., 350A Dutton St., Lowell)

MASSDOT ATHOL: MassDOT holds a public hearing about a proposed bridge replacement project in Athol for Main Street over the G&W Railroad. (Tuesday, 6 p.m. | More Info and Register)

WEST-EAST RAIL: MassDOT holds a public meeting about the Boston and Albany Corridor Service Development Plan, which will study how to operate passenger rail service. Officials say this is a "critical step towards advancing West-East Rail." (Tuesday, 6 p.m. | Register)

TIP TUNNEL MAINTENANCE CLOSURE: The I-93 Tip O'Neill Tunnel southbound will close to all traffic beginning Tuesday at 11 p.m., with plans to reopen to traffic at

5 a.m. Wednesday. "The closure will begin on I-93 southbound at exit 20 (Sullivan Square)," MassDOT said on Oct. 1. "Additional points closed will include access from Route 1 (Tobin Bridge) southbound to I-93 southbound, access from Storrow Drive to I-93 southbound, and all other tunnel on-ramps. Access to I-93 southbound will be maintained from Albany Street. This closure is necessary for crews to safely conduct multiple maintenance activities." (Tuesday, 11 p.m.)

Wednesday, Oct. 7, 2026

SJC: Supreme Judicial Court holds a special sitting at the Hampden County Superior Court with three cases on the docket, including one dealing with a denied license to carry firearms. (Wednesday, 9:30, 50 State St., Springfield | More Info and Livestream)

QUESTION 4 FORUM: Worcester State University hosts a forum about Question 4, the ballot measure that would allow Bay Staters to register to vote and cast their ballots on Election Day. Hosted as part of the Commonwealth Ballot Forum Initiative alongside Salem State University and UMass Amherst, the conversation will offer perspectives from elected officials, local civic organizations and the Worcester City Clerk's Office. (Wednesday, 9:30 a.m., Worcester State University, Fuller Theater, 2nd floor, Shaughnessy Administration Building)
ENERGY EFFICIENCY: Energy Efficiency Advisory Council's Executive Committee meets. (Wednesday, 10 a.m. | Register)

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT AWARENESS: Massachusetts Permanent Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities hosts a celebration for National Disability Employment Awareness Month. Lt. Gov. Driscoll gives the keynote. Sen. Lovely and Rep. Garballey will be recognized. There's also an afternoon panel at 2 p.m. in Room 428 called "Artificial Intelligence, Disability, and the Future of Work," which will bring together leaders in accessibility, employment, technology and the disability community. (Wednesday, 11:30 a.m., Great Hall | More Info and Zoom)

BIOGEN CEO: Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce hosts a conversation with Biogen CEO Christopher Viehbacher. The event, part of the chamber's series called "Executive Exchange: Insights From Prominent CEOs," will dive into Biogen's strategic direction ahead of the company's 50th anniversary, the evolving role of corporate leadership and opportunities for the region. (Wednesday, 11:30 a.m., The Colonnade Hotel, 120 Huntington Ave., Boston | Register)

AUTHOR TALK: State Library of Massachusetts hosts an Author Talk with Byron Williams on his book, "Liberty and Equality in America: Examining the Radical and Paradoxical Legacy of the Declaration of Independence." Williams is a columnist and former NPR-affiliate host. The book explores issues including slavery, westward expansion, capitalism, civil rights, education and civil liberties, according to the State Library blog. (Wednesday, 12 p.m., State Library, Room 341 | Livestream)

LEWIS BALLOT QUESTION SESSION: Sen. Lewis hosts an informational session on the nine questions appearing on Massachusetts' Nov. 3 ballot. (Wednesday, 12:30 p.m., McCarthy Senior Center, 30 Converse St., Wakefield)

LIFE SCIENCES: Massachusetts Life Sciences Center Investment Committee meets. Agenda items deal with approval for the Pathmaker Program, Business Builds: Life Sciences Awards, MassNextGen Awards, Impact Catalyst Award and an allocation for

internship programs. (Wednesday, 2 p.m. | Agenda and Access)

AI AND DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT: Alexandra DeVoe, a lead accessibility engineer for the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security, joins a panel on artificial intelligence, disability, and the future of work hosted by the Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities. DeVoe, who has more than 20 years of experience in web design, front-end engineering, and accessibility, is expected to discuss the role of accessibility as new technologies are designed and introduced. (Wednesday, 2 p.m., Room 428 | Register and Virtual Access)

SENATE COMMITTEE ON POST AUDIT AND OVERSIGHT: Senate Committee on Post Audit and Oversight holds a hearing about the implementation of the 2019 law that requires the hands-free use of cellphones while driving. Organizations invited to testify include the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, the Registry of Motor Vehicles, AAA Northeast and the Safe Roads Alliance. Drivers who violate the law could face fines of up to $500. (Wednesday, 3 p.m., Room B-2 | More Info)

BLIND VENDORS: Massachusetts Elected Committee of Blind Vendors meets. (Wednesday, 5 p.m. | Agenda and Livestream)
BRIMFIELD STATE FOREST: Department of Conservation and Recreation hosts a listening session to review final draft recommendations for the Brimfield State Forest Trail Master Plan. (Wednesday, 6 p.m. | More Info and Zoom)

MINOGUE RALLY: Republican gubernatorial candidate Mike Minogue hosts a "Rally in the City," where attendees can register to vote. (Wednesday, 6 p.m., Park City Southie, 411 Dorchester Ave., Boston)

MASSDOT ADAMS: MassDOT holds a public hearing about a proposed project in Adams to replace the bridge superstructure for Cook Street over the Hoosic River. (Wednesday, 7 p.m. | Register)

Thursday, Oct. 8, 2026

MASSTERLIST HEALTHCARE CRUNCH: MASSterList and the State House News Service host "Healthcare Cost Crunch: Understanding Drivers and Designing Solutions in Mass." Speakers include Health and Human Services Kiame Mahaniah, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts CEO Sarah Iselin, Beth Israel Lahey COO Peter Shorett, Harvard Medical School professor Michael Chernew and Dr. Zirui Song of Massachusetts General Hospital. Healthcare spending in Massachusetts has repeatedly eclipsed the state's cost containment benchmark, with soaring costs affecting the decisions people make about getting care and forcing residents and employers to weigh bottom line financial decisions. Gov. Healey's Health Care Affordability Work Group in August released initial recommendations that involve setting a default out-of-network payment rate, updating the state's surrogate decision-making and healthcare proxy laws, tamping down the use of "low-value" care, lowering prescription drug costs and reining in spending at the Group Insurance Commission, among other ideas. (Thursday, 8 a.m., UMass Club, 1 Beacon St., Boston | Register)

DCR STEWARDSHIP: DCR Stewardship Council meets. Agenda includes a report from DCR Commissioner Nicole LaChapelle, a partnership update and public comment. (Thursday, 9 a.m. | Agenda and Zoom)

COMPETITIVENESS INDEX: Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce hosts a hybrid discussion about the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation's annual competitiveness index and poll. The index explores the commonwealth's strengths and weaknesses, as well as factors influencing economic growth, business competitiveness and quality of life. Speakers include MTF President Doug Howgate, Travis McCready of commercial real estate firm JLL, Babson College President Stephen Spinelli Jr., Associated Industries of Massachusetts President Brooke Thomson, and chamber CEO Jim Rooney. (Thursday, 9:30 a.m., 265 Franklin St., Suite 1701, Boston | Register)

DEAFBLIND AWARENESS: Massachusetts DeafBlind Awareness Day will highlight the importance of services to support residents who are deafblind. The event's theme is "From Infants to Elders: Real Stories...Real Lives." Rep. Livingstone gives remarks. (Thursday, 10 a.m., Great Hall)

SUMMER LEARNING: Boston After School & Beyond celebrates its "5th Quarter of Learning" with state and city education leaders, including DESE Commissioner Pedro Martinez and Boston Public Schools Superintendent Mary Skipper. The event will feature data from summer 2026 on enrollment, attendance and student skill growth, along with recognition of summer programs and discussion of summer learning. (Thursday, 10 a.m., School Committee Room, Bruce C. Bolling Municipal Building, 2300 Washington St., Roxbury)

MWRA FIELD TRIP: Massachusetts Water Resources Authority Advisory Board takes a field trip to Stoneham. The event features a dedication of the newly named Laskey Building, formerly the Spot Pond Covered Storage Facility, in honor of Fred Laskey's 25 years as MWRA executive director. (Thursday, 10:30 a.m., 15 Woodland Road, Stoneham | Register)

HOUSE: House meets in an informal session. (Thursday, 11 a.m., House Chamber)

SENATE: Senate is likely to meet in an informal session. (Thursday, 11 a.m., Senate Chamber)

SCHOLARSHIP TAX CREDIT: Former Massachusetts Education Secretary under Gov. Baker, Jim Peyser, hosts former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Education under President Trump, Jim Blew, for the Harvard Kennedy School's Education Policy Colloquium. Blew will discuss the new federal scholarship tax credit, which will go into effect in January 2027, although it has not yet been authorized in Massachusetts. (Thursday, 12 p.m., Wapp Cason Seminar Room, Taubman 102, Harvard Kennedy School, 79 John F. Kennedy St., Cambridge)

QUESTION 9 FORUM: UMass Amherst hosts a forum on Question 9, the ballot referendum in which voters will decide whether to uphold or repeal the 2024 gun reform law. Speakers include Toby Leary, leader of The Civil Rights Coalition and No on 9 Campaign, and Megan DesAutels, campaign coordinator for the Yes on 9 Campaign. The event is part of the Commonwealth Ballot Forum Initiative that also involves Salem State University and Worcester State University. (Thursday, 12 p.m., UMass Amherst, Old Chapel, Great Hall)

QUESTION 7 FORUM: Salem State University hosts a forum on Question 7, the ballot measure enabling single-family homes to be built on smaller lots. Speakers include Andrew Mikula, campaign chair for the Yes on 7 Campaign, and Dave Koffman of the Massachusetts Municipal Association who's representing the

opposition. The event is part of the Commonwealth Ballot Forum Initiative that also involves UMass Amherst and Worcester State University. (Thursday, 12:15 p.m., Salem State University, Forten 123, Harrington Campus)
VACCINE PURCHASING: Massachusetts Vaccine Purchasing Advisory Council meets. The group's role is to help with the distribution of recommended childhood vaccines. Massachusetts has disentangled itself from federal immunization recommendations after Health and Human Services Secretary Robert Kennedy Jr. overhauled a key advisory panel. For remote access, contact cmcreynolds@mcaap.org. (Thursday, 4 p.m., Massachusetts Medical Society, 860 Winter St., Waltham | More Info)

CHRISTOPHER CASSIDY: Former NASA astronaut and Navy SEAL Christopher Cassidy is the featured speaker at a leadership forum hosted by the USS Constitution Museum. WCVB anchor and reporter Ben Simmoneau moderates the conversation. The event starts with a cocktail reception at 5:30 p.m., followed by the program at 6:30 p.m. "Chris Cassidy has led in environments where preparation, trust and sound judgment are not abstract ideas - they are essential," museum CEO Jeff Draeger said. "This evening offers a rare opportunity to learn directly from Captain Cassidy and consider how each of us can prepare to meet demanding moments with greater clarity and purpose." (Thursday, 5:30 p.m., USS Constitution Museum, Charlestown Navy Yard, Boston)

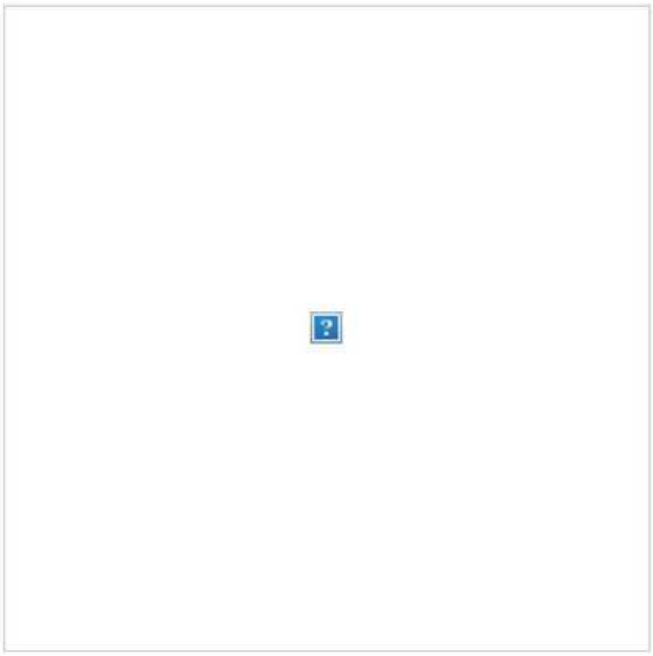
GUBERNATORIAL DEBATE: Candidates for governor Maura Healey and Mike Minogue square off in their first debate, hosted by WBZ-TV. "It's gonna be a barnburner," moderator Jon Keller said. Healey has agreed to the WBZ debate and one televised debate hosted by a media consortium consisting of WCVB, WBUR, and the Boston Globe in partnership with the Bay State Banner and El Planeta. Minogue's campaign says he has accepted invitations for four televised debates: with WBZ, the media consortium, WWLP and WFXT. "Maura Healey has spent three years driving up energy and housing costs, failing to conduct the audit, and making it harder to live and work in Massachusetts. Voters deserve to hear how she tries to defend her disastrous record. Hard-working families are struggling to get ahead on her watch. They deserve direct answers. They should be allowed every opportunity to contrast our two clearly different paths in this tipping-point election," Minogue said in a statement last week. Healey's campaign manager said in August that the debates "will outline the clear choice voters will have in November between a MAGA candidate who supports Donald Trump's agenda, and Governor Healey who is committed to lowering costs, protecting people's rights and freedoms, and standing up to Donald Trump." (Thursday, 5:30 p.m., WBZ-TV, 1170 Soldiers Field Road, Boston)

LEOMINSTER STATE FOREST: Department of Conservation and Recreation holds a public meeting to review final draft recommendations for the Leominster State Forest Trail Master Plan. (Thursday, 6 p.m. | More Info and Zoom)

MASSDOT CONWAY-SHELBURNE: MassDOT holds a public meeting about a proposed bridge preservation and superstructure replacement project in Conway and Shelburne. It involves Bardwell's Ferry Road over the Deerfield River. (Thursday, 7 p.m., Conway Grammar School, 24 Fournier Road, Conway | More Info)

Friday, Oct. 9, 2026
SJC: Supreme Judicial Court hears arguments in four cases, including whether the Superior Court erred in requiring an insurer to pay over $50 million in restitution

and over $115 million in civil penalties. (Friday, 9 a.m., John Adams Courthouse, Room 1, 1 Pemberton Square, Boston | More Info and Livestream)



Questions?
Please reach out to Andrew Napolitano.

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Daily Advances & SHNS Articles

September 16, 2026

Gov. Maura Healey

11:00.....Joins GBH Radio's "Boston Public Radio" for the monthly "Ask the Guv" segment, featuring questions from co-hosts Jim Braude and Margery Eagan as well as from GBH callers.....GBH Studio, Boston Public Library, Copley Square, Boston | Livestream

Daily Events

9:00.....Department of Fire Services' 31st annual Fire & Life Safety Education Conference kicks off. Home Care Provider Coordinator Joel Bartlett and Home Care Program Coordinator Shannon Turner of the Executive Office of Aging & Independence will give a keynote on resources and partnerships to help first responders protect older adults.....Conference continues on Thursday.....Wellsworth Hotel & Conference Center, 14 Mechanic St., Southbridge

10:00.....Health and Human Services Secretary Mahaniah and Education Secretary Zrike visit Athol Community Elementary School and Athol-Royalston Middle School as part of Manhaniah's Community Mental Health Tour series. Operated by Heywood Healthcare and supported by the Department of Public Health, the programs provide integrated medical care, behavioral health, mentoring, substance use prevention, and Community Health Worker services directly within schools, the administration said. RSVP to molly.doris-pierce@mass.gov.....1064 Pleasant St., Athol

10:00.....Boston Mayor Michelle Wu speaks at a Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce government affairs forum. More than 600 business, civic, nonprofit and community leaders are expected to attend.....Boston Marriott Copley Place, 110 Huntington Ave., Boston | Register

10:00.....Wilmington holds groundbreaking ceremony for Wilmington Elementary School, Treasurer Goldberg attends.....Wilmington Elementary School, 320 Salem St., Wilmington

10:30.....Republican candidate for secretary of state Anne Brensley holds press conference on an election access proposal with statewide implications, according to her campaign. Brensley will be joined by Portuguese-American community leaders and the announcement "will focus on ensuring that every eligible voter can understand the ballot and participate independently in Massachusetts elections," her campaign said.....City Gates Plaza, Ponta Delgada Blvd., Fall River

10:30.....U.S Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins plans to discuss the U.S. Department of Agriculture's priorities with state department of agriculture leaders during the plenary session at the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture 2026 Annual Meeting.....Holiday Inn Portland – By the Bay, 88 Spring St., Portland, Maine

11:00.....Lt. Gov. Driscoll, Rep. McGonagle and Deputy Secretary of Veterans' Services Andrea Gayle Bennett speak at a ceremony honoring Brigadier General Enoch "Woody" Woodhouse II as the newly appointed emeritus chair of the Hanscom FCU Charitable Foundation. Woodhouse is a Roxbury native and one of the Tuskegee Airmen, a veteran of the 332nd Fighter Group.....Nurses Hall

11:00.....Massachusetts Permanent Commission on the Status of Persons with Disabilities meets. Agenda includes a presentation from Elizabeth LaMontagne, MassHealth's chief operating officer. There's also a Health Care For All presentation about federal changes to MassHealth eligibility and enforcement.....Room 222 | Agenda and Livestream

11:00.....Governor's Council holds a hearing on Gov. Healey's nomination of Kristen Bonavita as a District Court judge. She's run a solo practice in Newburyport for the past 15 years.....Council Chamber | Livestream

12:00.....Lt. Gov. Driscoll chairs a meeting of the Governor's Council.....Governor's Council Chambers

1:00.....Mass. Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board meets.....Morse Institute Library, 14 E. Central St., Natick | Zoom

3:30.....Cannabis Control Commission holds remote application clinic and information session for those interested in applying for the social equity program.....More Info and Registration

5:30.....Mike Minogue, the Republican nominee for governor, holds a meet and greet event alongside congressional candidate Tyler Macallister.....Montano's Restaurant, 481 Route 6, North Truro | RSVP

6:30.....MassDOT holds design public hearing on proposed safety improvements for Vinal Square in Chelmsford.....Chelmsford Senior Center, 75 Groton Road, North Chelmsford | More Info

The Legislature

.....No sessions.....

Census offers new snapshot of Mass. income, poverty
Three New England states had significantly lower poverty rates than Massachusetts
Colin A. Young

Sept. 15, 2026.....A new federal report shows that roughly 9% of Massachusetts residents are in poverty, a rate that it describes as being "significantly lower" than in 20 other states and the nation as a whole and "significantly higher" than eight peer states.

The U.S. Census Bureau released a trove of reports and data on 2025 income, poverty and health insurance coverage levels nationally Tuesday. The releases showed that real median household income was $87,460 last year, the highest since records began in 1967, and that the official poverty rate fell 0.5 percentage points to 10.2%. There were 26.7 million Americans (or 7.9%) who were uninsured for the entire year, the bureau reported.

State-level data on poverty was released in the form of three-year averages, with Massachusetts' average landing at 9.1%, down a tenth of a percentage point from the three-year average reported a year ago. That puts the Bay State toward the low-poverty end of the 50-state spectrum: below the national rate and 20 states plus D.C., statistically tied with 21 other states, and with higher poverty than the eight lowest-poverty states.

The eight states that the Census Bureau found had significantly lower poverty than Massachusetts over the three-year span were Maine, Minnesota, Nebraska, Vermont, Delaware, Maryland, Utah and New Hampshire.
The national three-year average poverty rate was 10.7%. The states with significantly higher poverty rates were Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, Alabama, Kentucky, West Virginia, North Carolina, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Georgia, District of Columbia, Nevada, Texas, Michigan, Florida, South Carolina, New York, Ohio, California, Arizona and Tennessee.

Massachusetts featured more prominently in a paper published Tuesday by the Census Bureau, this one looking at the "substantial effect" that state and federal tax policies have on the economic wellbeing of American households.

Using pooled data from tax years 2023, 2024 and 2025, the paper estimated state income tax liability, state credits, and post-tax income by state. Massachusetts had the highest median household pretax income at $114,600, and the highest median household post-tax income at $95,530, though in both cases a few states were close to Massachusetts and within the margin of error. At the other end of the rankings was Mississippi, where the median household post-tax income was recorded as $51,890.

The Census Bureau paper estimated a median state income tax liability of $4,206 and a median federal tax liability of $15,750, with a median total tax liability calculated separately at $19,850 for a Bay Stater.

The median state liability puts Massachusetts near the top of a range that runs from a national low (among states that levy an income tax) of $1,331 in state tax liability in North Dakota to $6,172 in Maryland. The state and total liabilities here are lower than only Maryland and Washington, D.C.

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Campaign Notebook: Debate For Three? | Where Money's Coming From | Data Center Ballot Q

State House News Service

... Republican gubernatorial candidate Mike Minogue doesn't just want to debate Gov. Maura Healey — on Monday he called on fall debate hosts to invite independent gubernatorial candidate Andrea James to participate. In a statement, Minogue said voters "deserve the opportunity to hear all competing visions side by side" and that the "one-party system has failed too many Massachusetts families." Asked whether she's been invited to the debates, wants to partake in them, or plans to do so, James said in a statement to the News Service, "There are three candidates for governor on the November ballot. Yet, of the debates already confirmed with the other two candidates, I haven't been invited to any. If Maura Healey and Mike Minogue are on the debate stage, I should be there too." James is running a campaign focused on "workers over billionaires," a platform that supports things like universal healthcare and childcare, affordable housing and rent stabilization, immigration protection and labor rights. "I earned my place on the ballot, and Massachusetts voters deserve to hear from all three of us," James added in her statement. James' campaign said it has had no direct contact with either candidate or their campaigns when asked if Minogue got in touch before sending out his call to include James in debates. Minogue's campaign said he has agreed to four debates airing on WCVB, WBZ, WFXT and WWLP, and will participate regardless of whether James is included. The Healey campaign in August said Healey committed to two live, televised debates hosted by WBZ and by a consortium that includes WCVB, WBUR and the Boston Globe. Minogue refused to debate his former Republican opponent, Brian Shortsleeve, during the months they duked it out ahead of the primaries ... - Ella Adams

... In the final month before their general election matchup was cemented, Democrat Maura Healey collected almost $338,000 in donations from 293 Massachusetts municipalities while Republican Michael Minogue raised about $192,000 from 185 Bay State communities. August bank reports the gubernatorial campaigns filed with the Office of Campaign and Political Finance show that the incumbent Healey padded her August fundraising total with more than $68,000 in out-of-state money and Minogue boosted his coffers last month with more than $10,000 from people in other states as well as $400,000 of his own money. In total, Minogue reported $645,126.64 in receipts during August and Healey reported $398,227.28. Healey's top five donor communities in August were Boston ($39,385), Gloucester ($15,873), Barnstable ($11,698), Duxbury ($8,855) and Newton ($8,273). For Minogue, the top five donor bases last month were Boston ($11,180), Mashpee ($7,700), Haverhill ($6,600), Quincy ($5,890) and Nantucket ($5,517). Explore August's gubernatorial fundraising in greater depth with interactive maps breaking down donations by municipality, and more ... -- Colin A. Young

... Organizers of a ballot question committee to restrict data centers have filed initial paperwork with the state. According to a Monday filing with the Office of Campaign and Political Finance, the Committee to Restrict Data Centers formed and is based in West Springfield. The filing names James Fleming as chair and Stephen Hill as treasurer. Reached by the News Service, Fleming, who is behind the signature-gathering company JEF Associates, said the issue was brought to him by people concerned about data centers in Westfield and Holyoke. Fleming said he drew from existing legislative language around data centers to draft the question and have it be reviewed by the attorney general's office. He said the proposal requires data centers to secure a two-thirds vote of its host community and to meet other requirements around electricity, water and noise issues. If the measure materializes, it could reach

the 2028 ballot. Gov. Maura Healey this month signed an executive order requiring local approval and benefit agreements for data centers ... - Michael P. Norton

... At the first-ever Republican midterm convention in Dallas last week, President Donald Trump pledged to send a $5,000 dividend to every adult American citizen if the GOP remains in control of Congress this November. It is unclear how many Massachusetts Republicans traveled to Texas to hear Trump hype up supporters, telling them to pretend that he's running and that individuals who don't cast ballots "go to hell." MassGOP spokesperson Vincent Errichetti told the News Service last week that "a few members" of the state party planned to attend but the party was "much more focused on the fact that ZERO state wide incumbents are agreeing to debate until after early voting already has started." Errichetti did not disclose the names of attendees and on Tuesday could not pinpoint exactly how many MassGOP members went. NBC10 Boston reported that about 40 individuals from Massachusetts attended the convention, per MassGOP Chairwoman Amy Carnevale. "There's a lot of excitement," she told the station. A new Reuters/Ipsos poll shows Trump has a net 35% approval rating, with voters frustrated over the president's handling of issues including the economy, cost of living, inflation, foreign policy and the war in Iran. The president acknowledged that Republicans "might not win" at the convention, which offered a glimpse into the party's evolving ideologies and leaders that could take the helm in 2028. Vice President J.D. Vance pleaded with supporters to not "give the country over to a bunch of crazy people because you happen to disagree with us on a policy issue here or there," per NPR. Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas claimed that "communists and Islamists" are "coming together and sweeping over the Democrat Party." ... - Alison Kuznitz

... Republican candidate for treasurer Elizabeth Dionne seems to be trying to make former Cannabis Control Commission Chair Shannon O'Brien an issue in the 2026 treasurer's race, and is firing away at Treasurer Deb Goldberg in an attempt to do so. Dionne defended O'Brien on Sunday on WCVB's "On the Record," calling her new trio of complaints against Goldberg "really important." Dionne called on Goldberg to be "held accountable" for "false" claims against the former chairwoman and for "nine years of chaos and failed promises" at the CCC, an agency that sits outside the state Treasury. "Our opponent has made it clear she is either grossly incompetent or incapable of telling the truth. She has run an exclusively negative campaign that barely deserves a response," Goldberg campaign spokesperson Chris Keohan said in response to Dionne's comments. "Instead of continuing her disgraceful tactics we suggest she actually read up on what the role and responsibilities are of the Treasurer because she has proven throughout this campaign she has no clue." Dionne also said Sunday that voters should take away from the O'Brien "controversy" that "we have a 12-year incumbent who thinks that she's untouchable. She's acting entitled. We have her on tape saying that she would like to beat Bob Crane's 27-year record. So she wants to be in office for another 16 years." Keohan said Goldberg's comment about Crane's record "is a throwaway line and a joke the Treasurer uses often. Because she respects Treasurer Crane so much and loves the work she's doing." To beat Crane's record, Goldberg would have to serve past 2042, when she'll be 88 years old. Dionne also claimed that Goldberg "is refusing" to debate her; Keohan said Goldberg's campaign has received one request from WGBH, and that "we haven't yet said no. We are, however, insisting on formats where blatant lies will be called out" ... – Ella Adams

... Nearly every Democrat in the Legislature has endorsed Maura Healey for reelection, according to the Democrat's campaign website. With 49 days until

Election Day, only four Democratic senators (out of 35) are not listed on the Healey campaign website as having endorsed the governor's reelection efforts: Sens. Mark Montigny of New Bedford, Adam Gomez of Springfield, Michael Brady of Brockton and Robyn Kennedy of Worcester. On the House side, there are 16 Democrats (out of 131) who were not listed on the Healey campaign's endorsements page as of Tuesday midday, including federally indicted Reps. Chris Flanagan of Dennis and Francisco Paulino of Methuen. The others are Reps. Jack Lewis of Framingham, John Lawn of Watertown, Greg Schwartz of Newton, Michelle Ciccolo of Lexington, David Robertson of Tewksbury, Sean Garballey of Arlington, Erika Uyterhoeven of Somerville, Joseph McGonagle of Everett, Bridget Plouffe of Brockton, Michelle DuBois of Brockton, Rita Mendes of Brockton, John Moran of Boston, Brandy Fluker-Reid of Boston and Brian Murray of Milford. As of midday Tuesday, Healey's reelection campaign was also claiming support from the Republican representative who last year gave the GOP's rebuttal to her State of the Commonwealth address. Tucked among the roughly 150 names under the legislative endorsements section of Healey's website was an entry for "Marcus Vaughn — State Representative, Ninth Norfolk." Vaughn is a Republican from Wrentham who has been in the House since 2023. In 2025, the MassGOP tapped Vaughn to give the party's response to Healey's big annual address. "Massachusetts faces a crisis of affordability, with an unsustainable cost of living driving a mass exodus of residents. Folks are not buying what Governor Healey is selling, and the proof is in the lived experiences of the residents of Massachusetts," he said at the time. Vaughn could not be immediately reached for comment Tuesday. The Healey campaign said Vaughn has not endorsed Healey and his name was included on the endorsements page in error; it was soon removed ... -- Colin A. Young

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Healey launches push to expand maternal mental healthcare, screening
Updated regs 'strengthen' screening for perinatal mood and anxiety disorders and 'help providers identify concerns earlier'
Katie Castellani

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, Sept. 15, 2026.....In the wake of the Lindsay Clancy trial that sparked nationwide conversations about maternal mental healthcare, Gov. Maura Healey on Tuesday unveiled a series of measures aimed at improving postpartum mental health screening and support.

Healey plans to ask the Legislature to appropriate $2 million to expand Welcome Family, a program offering parents and caregivers with newborns a free, one-time home visit by an experienced maternal and child health nurse. The governor is also proposing to allocate $250,000 to expand the Department of Mental Health's Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Program for Moms (MCPAP for Moms). The funding requests will be included in a supplemental budget filing. During a press conference on Tuesday, Healey said she plans to file the supplemental budget "in the coming days."

The state Department of Public Health is also planning to update state regulations to improve screenings for mood and anxiety disorders during and after pregnancies to help identify mental health concerns sooner, the governor's office said.

"Becoming a mother is a profound life change, and every parent deserves support — not just during pregnancy, but in the months that follow," Healey said in a

statement. "Postpartum depression, anxiety and other maternal mental health conditions are real medical conditions, and no mother should feel ashamed to ask for help or feel like she has to navigate this journey alone. We're working to expand postpartum care, identify concerns earlier and connect families to the mental health support they need, because taking care of moms means taking care of the whole family."

The governor was visiting Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center Tuesday in Boston to make the announcements.

Welcome Family currently serves about 3,000 births annually and the additional $2 million would grant the opportunity for every parent and caregiver to get a home visit as there are about 68,000 births in the state per year, according to Healey's office. During the home visit, which takes place within the first few weeks after birth, a nurse can answer questions, conduct a health check for the mother or caregiver and newborn and offer referrals to services or resources. In 2025, the program offered 1,620 postpartum depression screenings, with 208 positive results and those who screened positive were referred to services, according to the governor's office.

MCPAP for Moms helps providers prevent, identify and treat mental health and substance use issues among parents and caregivers during pregnancy and after birth. The additional funds would enable the program to track postpartum psychosis data, create a clinical education team to help mental health providers notice and address behavioral health concerns, and boost education for mothers, families and providers about warning signs of postpartum psychosis.

DPH's updated regulations are expected to reflect a broader range of mental health conditions affecting people during and after a pregnancy — beyond the current regulations that mainly focus on postpartum depression, according to the governor's office. The regulations are also set to offer more chances for screening so a mother can get asked how she's doing while seeing her OB-GYN, primary care provider, pediatrician or another health care worker. DPH is also set to issue an updated guidance for health care providers on what to look for and how to respond when there are concerns as well as how to help patients find treatments and support.

"I think that the update is important because these are new steps that we're taking to make sure that things are covered. The short answer is I don't think that they were adequate and I think that Commissioner Goldstein can speak to this as well in the sense that they were too limited," Healey said when a reporter asked if she thought the current regulations were deficient.

DPH Commissioner Robbie Goldstein said the field is always changing.

"We're learning more. We know better ways to screen. We know what we're looking for, and so we need to update our regulations constantly so that we incorporate all of the new evidence and the new data into what we're asking hospitals and clinics and providers to do," Goldstein said.

The announcement comes as the trial of Clancy, a Duxbury mother who killed her three children before attempting suicide in 2023, gained nationwide attention and triggered discussions about access to maternal mental healthcare. Clancy's defense didn't deny she killed her three children, but argued she faced postpartum psychosis at the time and she had repeatedly sought treatment for mental health challenges.

The jury did not reach a unanimous verdict and the judge reportedly declared a mistrial on Sept. 4.

Healey did not mention Clancy by name while making the announcement on Tuesday, but said "there has been a lot of talk lately" in the state and across the country on the topic and that she's been "moved in recent weeks" by those who have shared their stories about postpartum challenges.

Asked whether she thought she would be discussing ways to improve maternal mental health screening and care had it not been for Clancy's trial and the attention it garnered, Healey said the case "certainly continued a conversation and raised the conversation nationally, internationally to a new level."

"The work and our commitment to maternal health, though, is something that our administration has been at for a while, working with the Legislature. I mentioned the maternal health bill that I signed over two years ago now,"

Healey said. "I think it's a very, of course, timely and important topic. It's always been an important topic. My hope is that through the increased attention on this, more people will have both a better understanding of what life is like and what can happen. There will be more awareness of resources available to people in their community, and that there will be a continued willingness to talk about it and to reach out for help."

"Our job in government is to make sure that we are doing everything we can to support moms, to support parents, and to support families, and to work with, you know, the existing providers that we have, and organizations, including community-based organizations - and we spoke of some great community-based organizations. We just want to make sure that they're supported," the governor continued.

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Report magnifies 'time lost' aboard slowest MBTA buses
Michael P. Norton

The MBTA's slowest bus routes are getting slower on average, but the transit agency is doing a better job of not leaving long gaps in service by "bunching" buses so that they arrive together, according to a new report.

TransitMatters, a Boston-based organization that advocates for fast, frequent, and reliable transit, said in its third annual Pokey/Schleppie report that average bus speeds across the 10 slowest MBTA bus routes fell to 6.42 mph from 6.52 mph last year. It called its just-released findings "awards for bus inefficiency."

Bunching, or buses arriving together rather than spaced apart, improved to 13.9% from 15.8% across the 10 most-bunched routes, the 52-page report said.

"For people who depend on these buses, that means time lost getting to work, school, and healthcare. There are plans and commitments in place to make these trips better," Cole Lewis, bus and mobility hubs program manager at TransitMatters, said. "We want this year's report to help move that work forward and make sure riders see the benefits."

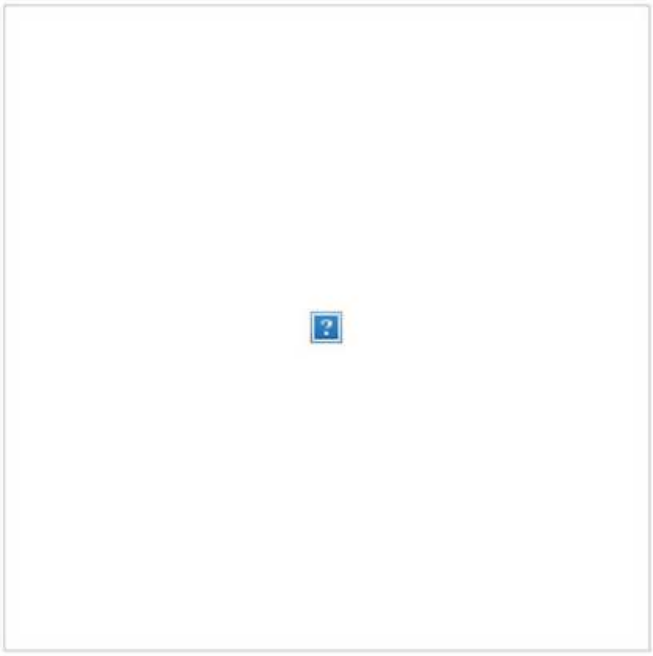
The SL4 runs from Nubian Square through Chinatown to South Station and ranked as the slowest route at 6.09 mph, followed by the #1 bus at 6.2 mph. The #1 bus was ranked the slowest in each of the previous two years, and serves Roxbury, Back Bay, Fenway-Kenmore, the South End and Cambridge.

"Over the past three years we have consistently found that many of the system's slowest and most unreliable buses are the routes predominantly serving Black and Brown communities and low-income neighborhoods – neighborhoods which often depend on transit," the report said. "Poor bus service is not just an issue of inefficiency; it is an issue of opportunity, mobility, and quality of life for these communities."

The report recommends advancing planned projects, restoring and expanding bus lanes, headway management to keep buses evenly spaces, and rolling out automated enforcement to address vehicles blocking bus lanes and bus stops.

The Pokey ("slowest") and Schleppie ("most bunched") rankings are modeled after a long-running advocacy campaign in New York City. Boston Mayor Michelle Wu's streets chief welcomed the report.

"The Pokey/Schleppie Report helps keep attention focused on the everyday experience of bus riders and underscores the value of sustained, data-driven work to improve service," Christopher Osgood, Boston's Interim Chief of Streets, said in a statement. "We appreciate TransitMatters' advocacy and partnership and look forward to continuing our work together to deliver faster, more dependable bus service across Boston."



Questions?
Please reach out to Andrew Napolitano.

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Daily Advances & SHNS Articles

August 28, 2026

Gov. Maura Healey

.....No public events.....

Daily Events

10:00.....USS Constitution gets underway from the Charlestown Navy Yard, firing a 21-gun salute off Fort Independence on Castle Island at about 11:30 a.m. and a 17-gun salute as she passes U.S. Coast Guard Base Boston, the former site of the shipyard where she was built and launched in 1797. The underway will be visible from the Boston Harborwalk, Castle Island and the Charlestown Navy Yard. The world's oldest commissioned warship afloat, the USS Constitution served in the Barbary Wars and the War of 1812.....Charlestown Navy Yard, Boston

The Legislature

.....No Senate session, no House session expected.....

Editor's Notes:

.....State Public Health Commissioner Robbie Goldstein's emergency order to temporarily classify all forms of kratom into Schedule I under state law takes effect. The order says that kratom, a leafy tropical tree native to Southeast Asia whose unregulated products are widely sold at gas stations and convenience stores, is an "imminent hazard to the public safety." Possession or distribution of kratom by any food, retail or other business constitutes an "imminent health hazard," and local boards of health, inspection departments and municipal governments can pursue "any enforcement action consistent with a finding of an imminent health hazard, up to and including summary suspension of a municipal license or permit held by the establishment including, but not limited to, a permit to operate," the order says. Massachusetts has recorded more than 100 kratom-associated deaths since 2020, including eight so far this year. Some people use kratom to self-treat conditions like substance use disorder and opioid withdrawal, but the products can vary dramatically in potency due to the addition of other substances. "Stores need to

remove kratom substances from their shelves," Gov. Maura Healey said last week. "And again, I'm doing this because I care a lot about people's health and safety, particularly the health and safety of young people." (Friday)

Climate chief leaving administration and Massachusetts
Ella Adams

Climate Chief Melissa Hoffer speaks at the inaugural Sustainability Day at the State House on Tuesday, Sept. 9, 2025.

Climate Chief Melissa Hoffer will be leaving the Healey administration later this year to become president of Vermont Law and Graduate School.

Hoffer's presidency in South Royalton, Vermont, will begin Dec. 1, and Gov. Maura Healey will be naming a successor before Hoffer departs, the administration said.

"I am honored and thrilled to join Vermont Law and Graduate School as its next president," Hoffer said in a statement. "VLGS has long been a national leader in environmental and public interest law, and the institution is uniquely positioned to lead in this time of momentous and intersecting challenges."

Healey called Hoffer "an extraordinary partner and climate leader," and expressed gratitude for her work; Energy and Environment Secretary Rebecca Tepper called Hoffer "a true climate champion whose leadership has helped move Massachusetts toward a more climate-ready future."

Before she joined the Healey administration in 2023, Hoffer was principal deputy general counsel and acting general counsel of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. She also had previously led the Energy and Environment Bureau in the attorney general's office under Healey.

"It has been the honor of a lifetime to serve as Massachusetts'—and the nation's—first cabinet level Climate Chief, and to make our whole-of-government approach a successful model for other states and local governments," Hoffer added.

CLF Vice President for Massachusetts Rishi Reddi said in a statement that Hoffer "did an extraordinary job in a new Massachusetts' cabinet position dedicated to holistically aligning all of state government against the escalating damage of climate change at a time when that work was never more important – and never more under attack."

VLGS Board Chair Glenn Berger said in a press release sent out Thursday afternoon that Hoffer's "vision and expertise complement the goals and mission of VLGS," and that "together, we will support up-and-coming law and policy leaders, build broad support for the school's efforts and ensure its continued success."

Hoffer's departure is the latest from Healey's leadership team, and the news comes on the heels of the announced departure of the Department of Higher Education's commissioner, Noe Ortega.

A handful of Healey's original Cabinet secretaries have also stepped down over the last four years, including former Housing Secretary Ed Augustus,former Public Safety Secretary Terrence Reidy, former Transportation Secretaries Monica Tibbits-Nutt and Gina Fiandaca, Economic Development Secretary Yvonne Hao, Health and Human Services Secretary Kate Walsh, Veterans Services Secretary Jon Santiago, and Education Secretary Patrick Tutwiler.

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Primary turnout reaches 9% on eve of early vote deadline
Ella Adams

More than 38,000 people voted over the last 24 hours, and Bay Staters have cast a total of 468,237 primary election ballots as of 4 p.m. Thursday, Secretary of State William Galvin's office said, bumping voter turnout up to 9%.

Of the ballots cast, 390,070 were Democratic and 78,167 were Republican.

Turnout had been sitting at 8.3% as of Wednesday afternoon, when the total ballot count was at 429,818.

Galvin's office said Thursday it had so far mailed 717,967 ballots to voters, 414,970 of which had been returned. The figure accounts for 57.8% of all mail-in ballots.

There were 53,267 early in-person ballots cast as of Thursday at 4 p.m., per Galvin's office, a jump from 24 hours earlier when that figure sat at 42,168.

Galvin on Thursday predicted that Massachusetts will see a higher turnout in the Sept. 1 primary elections than it did in 2022. He also told voters that if they have not yet returned their mail-in ballots, to not mail them and instead bring their completed ballots to an official drop box or vote in person.

Early voting is coming to a close Friday. Voting picks back up on Election Day on Sept.

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Healey moves to grow behavioral health workforce as access lags
One in 10 residents reported an unmet behavioral health need, a state survey found
Alison Kuznitz

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, Aug. 27, 2026.....The Healey administration rolled out a statewide campaign Thursday to bolster career interest in the behavioral healthcare sector, where persistent workforce shortages have made it difficult for some Bay Staters to access care.

The campaign, called "Turn Your Compassion Into Your Career," launched "this summer" and will continue into September with a mix of billboards, digital and social media, videos and community partnerships, Gov. Maura Healey's office said. The campaign's website delves into different behavioral healthcare roles; education and job-training programs; scholarships, grants and state financial aid programs; and job search and MassHire resources.

"Many people are drawn to work that helps others, but they may not know how many career pathways exist within behavioral health or where to begin," said

Funmi Aguocha, assistant commissioner of the Office of Behavioral Health Promotion and Prevention. "This campaign gives people a clear starting point and connects them with information that can help them turn their compassion, skills, cultural knowledge, and lived experience into impactful work."

Healey administration spokespeople did not immediately disclose the cost of the campaign. The fiscal 2026 budget called for a $500,000 mental health workforce pipeline program, aimed at encouraging a "culturally, ethnically and linguistically diverse behavioral health workforce through collaboration between colleges and behavioral health providers."

The campaign's website outlines the types of responsibilities and skills needed for behavioral health jobs, including peer-to-peer professionals, community health workers, mental health counselors, social workers, psychiatrists and psychologists. Campaign materials are available in English, Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese, Vietnamese, Arabic, Haitian Creole and Simplified Chinese, the administration said.

"A diverse workforce helps ensure that behavioral health programs and services are responsive to the needs of the communities they serve and that individuals can access support from professionals who understand and reflect their experiences," the website says. "As demand for behavioral health programs and services continues to grow, there is a need for people from all backgrounds to help build a stronger, more equitable behavioral health system."

More than one in five residents reported having a behavioral healthcare visit in 2025, and more than one in six individuals paid entirely out of pocket for the appointment, according to an annual survey from the Center for Health Information and Analysis. One in 10 residents had an unmet behavioral health need, which 5.4% attributed to the cost of care.

Massachusetts is "facing a behavioral health (BH) access crisis" that's largely fueled by provider shortages "across all settings," says a May report from the Health Policy Commission's Behavioral Health Workforce Center. Multiple inpatient psychiatric facilities and intensive outpatient programs have shuttered since 2020, and more than 25% of independent psychotherapy providers accept only cash payment that's partly due to low insurance reimbursement rates.

Providers with master's degrees delivered the majority of non-medical psychotherapy and psychiatric evaluation services but "often received the lowest reimbursement for those services," the HPC report found. Commercial insurers reimbursed those clinicians for psychotherapy at about 66% of the rate for physicians.

Health and Human Services Secretary Kiame Mahaniah on Thursday embarked on a statewide community mental health tour in Lawrence, where he visited a clinic run by Beth Israel Lahey Health Behavioral Services. Mahaniah plans to visit other centers and organizations focused on prevention, treatment and recovery in the coming months.

"This tour will not only amplify the good work happening in our communities but

will also help make sure residents know the resources available to them to preempt an emergency response," Mahaniah said.

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Don't mail it now, Galvin tells voters as primary turnout climbs
Secretary projects roughly 800,000 Democratic and 280,000 Republican ballots
Sam Drysdale

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, Aug. 27, 2026.....Massachusetts will see higher turnout in next Tuesday's primary elections than it did in 2022, Secretary of State William Galvin predicted Thursday while urging voters who have not yet returned their mail-in ballots to avoid putting them in the mail and instead vote in person or use a drop box.

Speaking at a press conference in the State Library, Galvin said 2026 turnout is difficult to project because voting habits have changed significantly since the last midterm primary. More voters now favor voting by mail or early and in person, he said, making comparisons with 2022 less precise.

Still, early numbers point upward.

As of Thursday morning, the state had received about 364,000 Democratic ballots through early in-person voting and vote by mail, along with about 73,000 Republican ballots, Galvin's office said. Both figures are higher than the corresponding totals four years ago.

"I'm obviously aware that in a number of other states, there's been pronounced increases in the Democratic primary turnout," Galvin said, attributing some of that trend to the political environment under President Donald Trump's administration.

In 2022, about 777,000 Democratic ballots and about 275,000 Republican ballots were cast. Galvin estimated that this year's Democratic turnout could reach roughly 800,000 with Republican turnout around 280,000.

"That's my guess, and it is a guess," he said.

The 2026 primaries feature fewer statewide contests than the previous midterm primary. There are only two statewide party nominations being decided:

Republicans will choose their nominee for governor, while Democrats will select a U.S. Senate nominee. But Galvin noted that several high-profile Democratic congressional contests could help drive participation.

The state's growing number of unenrolled voters also remains a factor. Democratic enrollment has fallen below 25% of Massachusetts voters, Galvin said, while Republican enrollment is between 7% and 8%. Increasingly, he said, Massachusetts voters are choosing to remain unenrolled, allowing them to decide which party's primary to participate in when an election arrives.

With Tuesday approaching, Galvin issued a particularly pointed warning to voters who have requested mail-in ballots but have not yet returned them. More than 100,000 ballots sent to voters had not been received by the state as of Thursday.

"They have the right to go in and vote in person should they choose to, but we strongly recommend if they were going to vote by mail, do not mail the ballot," Galvin said. "It's too late."

Instead, voters should bring their completed ballots to an official drop box or vote in person. Polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday.

"We just don't want to see people who have made a good faith effort to vote not have their vote count," he said.

Galvin also addressed the continuing legal fight over Trump's efforts to restrict mail voting. He emphasized that the federal executive orders at issue do not affect Tuesday's elections.

"They were never intended to affect the primary, mostly because the drafter of the so-called executive order has no interest in primaries as much as he has in trying to make sure he can help his party in the election," Galvin said about Trump.

The orders call on the U.S. Postal Service to restrict the delivery of mail-in ballots in states that don't hand over a list of eligible voters. They also direct the Homeland Security Department and Social Security Administration to create a list of certified absentee voters, which the Postal Service would refer to when delivering ballots.

Trump has blamed mail-in ballots for his 2020 loss to Democrat Joe Biden, calling them "inherently corrupt," though he has said he has used the method to cast his own votes.

"The cheating on mail-in voting is legendary," Trump said when he signed the order in March to limit mail-in voting. "It's horrible, what's gone on. It's very clearly covered ... I think this will help a lot with elections."

Galvin said Thursday, "The bottom line is the issues before the United States Supreme Court would only affect the general election."

Massachusetts is continuing its own legal challenge, with a hearing scheduled for next week. Galvin said the practical difficulties of implementing major changes to mail voting so close to November could make Trump's directives impossible to carry out this year.

"It would be bad policy at any time, but impractical completely to try to do it at this time," he said. "It will not be able to happen."

Galvin went further in describing what he believes is behind the effort.

"This whole issue, with regard to Trump, when it comes to vote-by-mail, is a strategy," he said. "It's a strategy to prevent people from voting and interfere with people's right to vote, because he believes that his people, the people that vote for him, will show up in person, and anybody else he doesn't trust."

Asked whether Massachusetts voters should make alternative plans for November because of the uncertainty around mail-in voting, Galvin said he was not advising them to do so yet. But he said he had already sought additional authority from the Legislature to expand voting options if necessary.

"I asked them for additional authority to do some things if I had to deal with that situation. They didn't give it to me," Galvin said. "But I'm used to that."

He said the state could consider expanding early, in person voting or polling hours, as well as finding other ways to deliver ballots.

"Maybe I'll have drones," Galvin said with a wry smile.

He also discussed federal election observers expected at some Massachusetts polling places Tuesday.

In July, the U.S. Department of Justice pledged to send monitors to observe polling locations in Boston and New Bedford for Sept. 1 primary elections. Gov. Maura Healey previously claimed this was "about intimidation" and "an effort to try to scare voters."

U.S. Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights Harmeet Dhillon said in a video posted on X, "This is something that DOJ does routinely."

"We're sending the monitors into cities and counties where there might have been some problems in the recent elections," Dhillon said.

Galvin said Thursday the state has historically worked cooperatively with the U.S. Department of Justice and federal officials, including during both Democratic and Republican administrations. Federal observers generally monitor election procedures in communities covered by the Voting Rights Act, he said, with Lawrence and other midsized cities among the places where he expects them to show up.

"We've never had in the past, at least, an adversarial relationship with the DOJ," Galvin said.

He stressed that observers may watch the process but cannot interfere with election officials or interact with voters.

"This is not new, and nor is it something we can't work with, provided it's clear they're there to observe, to see, not to interfere," he said.

Galvin sought to remind voters Thursday that the primary elections are consequential.

"It sets the table for who's going to appear on the November ballot," he said. "That's why it's so important."

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House Session Summary - Thursday, Aug. 27, 2026
State House News Service

The House enacted local bills Thursday affecting the Quabbin Watershed Advisory Committee, Wakefield and Belmont. The Belmont legislation, originally sponsored by Rep. David Rogers and Sen. Will Brownsberger, would scrap seating capacity requirements for licenses tied to the sale of alcohol beverages to be drunk on the premises. The House also passed local bills dealing with Provincetown and Tisbury.

The House returns for an informal session Monday. - Alison Kuznitz

CONVENES: The House convened at 11:03 a.m. with Rep. Donato of Medford presiding. Reps. Wong of Saugus and Berthiaume of Spencer were also present.

PLEDGE: Members, guests and staff pledged allegiance to the U.S. flag.

RESOLUTIONS: The House adopted resolutions from Reps. Linsky of Natick and Sullivan-Almeida of Abington.

FOXBOROUGH SEWER SERVICES: The House concurred in referring to the Environment and Natural Resources Committee SD 4069, a Sen. Feeney and Rep. Chaisson petition for legislation to authorize the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority to provide sewer services to a certain parcel of land in the town of Foxborough.

WALPOLE ALCOHOL LICENSES: The House ordered to third reading S 2532 to authorize the town of Walpole to grant up to 2 additional licenses for the sale of all alcoholic beverages not to be drunk on the premises.

QUABBIN WATERSHED: The House enacted S 3133 amending the membership of the Quabbin Watershed Advisory Committee.

BELMONT LIQUOR LICENSES: The House enacted H 5344 removing the seating capacity requirements of licenses for the sale of alcoholic beverages to be drunk on the premises in the town of Belmont.

WAKEFIELD SENIOR PROPERTY TAX: The House enacted H 5418 that the town of Wakefield be authorized to establish a means tested senior citizen property tax exemption in said town

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MALDEN PROPERTY: The House referred to the State Administration and Regulatory Oversight Committee HD 6291, a Rep. Donato petition for legislation to authorize the release or amendment of certain use restrictions on former state property in the city of Malden.

CALENDAR ITEMS: There were no objections to proceeding with matters contained in the Orders of the Day.

PROVINCETOWN CHARTER: The House engrossed H 5476 relative to the charter of the town of Provincetown.

TISBURY PLANNING BOARD: The House engrossed H 5434 to provide for the appointment of associate members of the planning board of the town of Tisbury to fill vacancies on the board.

MOMENT OF SILENCE: At the request of Rep. LeBoeuf of Worcester, the House stood in a moment of silence for Kurt Solomon of Worcester, who passed away Aug. 18. Rep. Donato read his obituary, saying Solomon had a 31-year career with the Worcester Police Department.

TIME OF MEETING: The House adopted a Speaker Mariano of Quincy order scheduling its next session for Monday at 11 a.m.

ADJOURNS: On a Rep. Berthiaume motion, the House adjourned at 11:13 a.m. to meet next on Monday at 11 a.m. in an informal session.

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Senate Session Summary - Thursday, Aug. 27, 2026
State House News Service

After a long morning recess, the Senate on Thursday sent three bills to Gov. Maura Healey's desk dealing with the Quabbin watershed advisory committee, alcohol licenses in Belmont and a senior property tax exemption in Wakefield. The Senate also took action on three other alcohol-related bills addressing licenses in Foxborough, Weston and Topsfield. The chamber plans to meet next on Monday at 11 a.m. on the eve of the Sept. 1 primary elections. - Ella Adams

CONVENES: Minority Leader Tarr of Gloucester gaveled the Senate to order at 11:17 a.m. There were no other senators present.

PLEDGE: Members, guests and staff rose to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

SUBJECT TO THE CALL: The Senate went into recess subject to the call of the chair at 11:17 a.m.

Sen. Jehlen of Somerville arrived in the chamber at 12:40 p.m. Sen. Tarr returned at 12:45 p.m.

RETURN: The Senate returned to order at 12:46 p.m. with Sen. Jehlen at the rostrum.

ENACTMENTS: The Senate enacted the following bills on one voice vote:

S 3133 amending the membership of the Quabbin watershed advisory committee;

H 5344 removing the seating capacity requirements of licenses for the sale of alcoholic beverages to be drunk on the premises in the town of Belmont;

H 5418 authorizing the town of Wakefield to establish a means tested senior citizen property tax exemption.

ORDERS OF THE DAY: There were no objections to proceeding with the Orders of the Day.

FOXBOROUGH ALCOHOL: The Senate adopted a Sen. Feeney amendment, S 3266, to S 3094 authorizing the town of Foxborough to grant three additional licenses for the sale of all alcoholic beverages to be drunk on the premises. The Senate then engrossed the bill.

DENNIS LEGAL NOTICES: The Senate engrossed S 3098 authorizing the town of Dennis to publish legal notices digitally.

WESTON ALCOHOL: The Senate engrossed H 5548 authorizing the town of Weston to grant an additional license for sale of all alcoholic beverages to be drunk on the premises.

TOPSFIELD ALCOHOL: The Senate concurred in the House amendment (H 5650) to S 2526 authorizing the town of Topsfield to convert 4 licenses for sale of wine and malt beverages not to be drunk on the premises to 4 licenses for the sale of all alcoholic beverages not to be drunk on the premises and to prohibit the sale of alcoholic beverages in the containers less than 200 milliliters.

ADJOURNMENT ORDER: The Senate adopted a Sen. Tarr order to adjourn and meet next on Monday at 11 a.m.

IN MEMORIAM: The Senate adopted a Sen. O'Connor of Weymouth motion that the Senate adjourn in memory of Irene Janet Hershman of Hull, who passed away at the age of 96 on July 25, 2026. Irene spent a career as an English teacher at Hull High School and was a performer on theater and musical stages.
Members, guests and staff stood in a moment of silence.

ADJOURNS: The Senate adjourned at 12:56 p.m. in memory of Irene Hershman, with plans to meet again at 11 a.m. on Monday.

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Markey taps online influencers as Moulton hits on age and tech
Campaign finance records show more than $546K to a digital firm, plus paid creator partnerships
Ella Adams, Katie Castellani

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, Aug. 27, 2026.....Influencers are taking to social media to vouch for U.S. Sen. Ed Markey in his reelection campaign — in both paid and unpaid ways — as Congressman Seth Moulton continues to use the 80-year-old incumbent's age as a talking point in his attempts to unseat Markey.

When Markey faced a primary challenge from U.S. Rep. Joseph Kennedy III in 2020, his campaign got a boost from a network of young and very online supporters, a base of social media cred and support that came to be known as the Markeyverse. This time around, Markey seems to be looking to revive that type of a network.

In a video on Instagram labeled as being "In partnership with @edmarkey," 25-year-old influencer Maria Comstock satirically speaks in favor of Moulton.

"Well I'm voting for Seth Moulton because he's younger than Ed Markey, which logically means he's more progressive. No, stop, don't look at his voting record," Comstock sarcastically says in the video. "Anyway, vote Moulton for a change for better or worse. Maybe worse," Comstock says at the end of the video, which has over 200,000 views.

In another post that's labeled as a partnership with Markey, influencer Brett Carter (@fossildaddy) urges viewers to vote for the incumbent and follow his Instagram account.

"He has consistently stood up for LGBTQ equality and for immigration policies that emphasize civil rights, due process and human dignity," Carter says.
Boston travel creator @kevykevvworldwide focused an Aug. 13 Markey partnership video on the incumbent's workplace safety legislation.

Some influencers are striking out on their own, promoting without a partnership. An Aug. 19 video posted on Instagram by Sarah Whitman (@slarrry) tells viewers she's picking Markey because "he's not taking any money from corporate or foreign lobbying and he never has"; an Aug. 3 video posted by Katie McManus (@therealkatiemcmanus) calls Markey "one of the most progressive senators in Congress" and says "he's been doing so much to resist the current regime"; and a July 8 video with almost 95,000 views posted by influencer Victoria Hammett calls Moulton "a snake in the grass" and "one of the most conservative" reps in Congress before speaking about Moulton's past AIPAC connections.

Asked by the News Service how much Markey's campaign has spent on social media video ads, spokesperson Jonathan Ng said, "The campaign is proud to work with content creators who share Senator Markey's progressive values and believe in the fights he is leading – lowering costs, taking on corporate power, protecting our climate, and delivering for working families in Massachusetts. We believe creators should be fairly compensated for their work, and every paid partnership is clearly identified so voters know when they are seeing sponsored campaign content."

Campaign finance records show that between January 2025 and June 2026, Markey spent more than $546,000 on political communication services from Aisle 518 Strategies, a digital and political consulting firm focused on progressive candidates. He also paid $6,000 to Four Lions Media; Comstock is one of the company's 36 followers on Instagram.

Moulton's campaign did not respond to an inquiry about whether Moulton has paid, or done partnerships with, influencers to promote his campaign and platform.

Moulton's camp this week has ramped up attacks on Markey and "his tech illiteracy and confusion about the difference between AI and social media." The criticism stems from Markey's response to a debate question last week. Asked whether he personally uses AI platforms like Claude or ChatGPT, Markey said he uses "whatever is inside of my iPhone and my iPad, whatever comes up. And I don't know what companies my iPad might be using."

Asked Wednesday on CNN how important it is for lawmakers to understand AI technologies that they are seeking to regulate, Markey pointed to the multistate settlement announced Wednesday with Meta, which is primarily a social media company.

"Well, I am the leader in the House and Senate on AI. I'm the leader. It's my legislation. It's my legislation that just was used to win a $17 billion settlement against Meta and Mark Zuckerberg today. It's my legislation. So I am the leader," he said in an interview that Moulton's campaign amplified.

In the same CNN interview, Markey claimed that it is Moulton who does not have a firm understanding of technology.

"Just last week, Seth Moulton said there was no AI in 2020. It's like he doesn't even understand the technology. Of course there was AI. That's what I've been looking ahead and leading the way on. He has no record, no legislation. He doesn't know what he's talking about," Markey said.

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Retailers sue to halt kratom ban days before it takes effect
Plaintiffs argue the data shows 'long-standing' conditions, not a 'sudden emergency'
Alison Kuznitz

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, Aug. 26, 2026.....Four Massachusetts retailers that sell kratom have filed a lawsuit seeking to block an emergency order from taking effect this Friday that would temporarily classify all products derived from the Southeast Asian plant as a Schedule I drug.

The complaint against the Department of Public Health and DPH Commissioner Robbie Goldstein contends that Goldstein lacked the authority to place kratom into Schedule I, failed to satisfy state requirements to justify the emergency order, and too broadly applied the order to all kratom products rather than synthetic derivatives that pose greater health risks.

The retailers filed the lawsuit in Suffolk County Superior Court last Friday. They include Rihaan Corporation, which does business as Jay's Smoke Shop in Salem; Bhakti, LLC in North Billerica; V & K Smoke Shop, LLC in Quincy; and Ambreen & S Inc. in Bellingham. They're represented by California- and Washington-based attorneys with Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton.

State health officials have not yet filed a response as of Wednesday, and no hearing date has been scheduled.

Gov. Maura Healey and Goldstein announced the emergency order concerning kratom sales Aug. 13 through a press release, giving convenience stores, gas stations and other commercial establishments about a two-week period to remove all forms of kratom products from their shelves.

"I'm doing this because I care a lot about people's health and safety, particularly the health and safety of young people," Healey later told reporters. "And parents shouldn't have to be afraid that their kids are going to walk into some gas station or a convenience store and buy something that looks harmless that later they ingest or use with other substances that leaves them in really bad shape, including death."

A DPH spokesperson said Wednesday afternoon that the department had not been served with the lawsuit. It is unclear how the complaint may interfere with the order that's supposed to take effect in two days. The plaintiffs are seeking a temporary restraining order, followed by a hearing and preliminary injunction that bars local authorities from enforcing the kratom order until a decision is made in the case.

"Residents across Massachusetts have raised serious concerns about dangerous kratom products being sold in smoke shops, convenience stores, and gas stations, often in forms that are easily accessible to young people," the DPH spokesperson said. "These products are not FDA-approved for medical use, are sold without consistent safety standards, and can vary widely in their ingredients and potency, leaving consumers with no reliable way to know what they are taking."

In its press release, the Healey administration warned that unregulated kratom products can lead to physical dependence and withdrawal symptoms that are similar to opioid withdrawal. While derived from a leafy tropical plant, kratom can be mixed with "highly concentrated" and lab-modified compounds that "can have significantly stronger opioid-like effects," the administration said.

Goldstein's order calls kratom an "imminent hazard to the public safety." The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration last month filed notices of intent to temporarily place the alkaloid 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH), which is naturally occurring within the kratom plant, and three related substances into Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act.

Beyond conforming with federal scheduling, state law outlines another pathway for the DPH commissioner to temporarily classify dangerous drugs. The commissioner needs to make three key findings: The substance has a "high potential for abuse," it has "no currently accepted medical use in treatment in the United States," and there's a "lack of accepted safety for use of the substance under medical supervision," according to the lawsuit.

In a core argument in the lawsuit, the plaintiffs say Goldstein did not sufficiently establish those findings, which makes his order "invalid."

"Plaintiffs do not dispute that some kratom products raise genuine public-health concerns, that some products are marketed irresponsibly, or that the Commonwealth may lawfully regulate them—through labeling requirements, potency limits, age restrictions, testing requirements, or targeted scheduling of concentrated and synthetic derivatives," the lawsuit says. "Plaintiffs' claims concern whether the Commissioner complied with the statutes that govern how the Commonwealth may declare a substance a Schedule I controlled substance, and whether the regulation he adopted is supported by the reasons he gave."

The DPH order delegates monitoring and enforcement responsibilities to municipalities. Local boards of health, inspection departments and municipal governments are authorized to pursue "any enforcement action consistent with a finding of an imminent health hazard," including a summary suspension of a business's license or permit to operate.

The lawsuit says that enforcement mechanism could deprive the plaintiffs of their due process rights, contending the order "prescribes no notice, no pre-suspension opportunity to be heard, no post-suspension hearing within any specified period, no standards governing the exercise of that discretion, and no mechanism for prompt review."

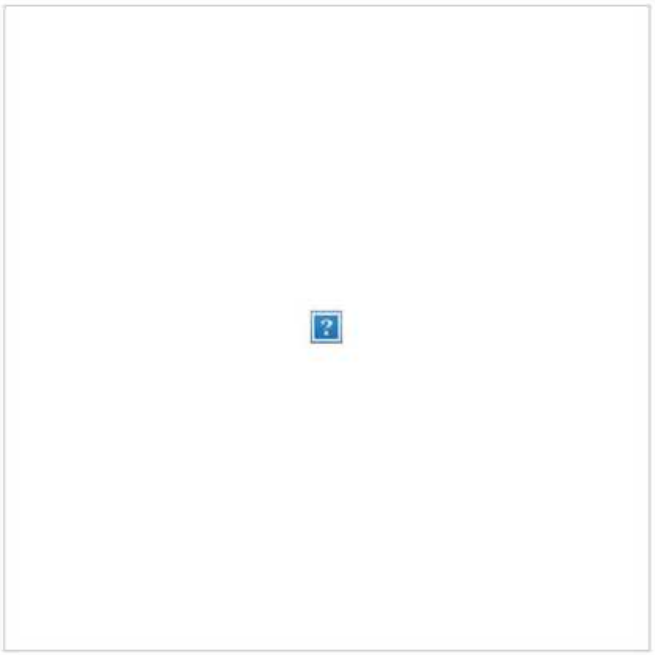
Come Friday, the plaintiffs say the DPH order will turn their store inventories into "contraband" and that removing kratom products will cause "immediate and substantial loss." The plaintiffs add they will suffer "imminent and irreparable harm," including losing customer relationships and facing "reputational consequences" from being designated an imminent health hazard.

Massachusetts has recorded more than 100 kratom-associated deaths since 2020, according to the order. The Massachusetts and Rhode Island Poison Center has reported about 130 kratom-related calls from January 2021 through July 29, 2026, and this year's volume so far is nearly equal to all calls made in 2025.

The lawsuit says that public health data does not "describe a sudden emergency."

"The Order describes long-standing market conditions, essentially flat mortality data, and undifferentiated poison-center and surveillance figures, and it attributes acute risk to a discrete class of concentrated and synthetic products," the lawsuit

says. "Those reasons do not explain why immediate adoption of a rule declaring the entire kratom plant and every product held out as kratom a Schedule I controlled substance was necessary, or why ordinary notice and comment as to that scope would have been contrary to the public interest."



Questions?
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Daily Advances & SHNS Articles

October 14, 2026

Gov. Maura Healey

9:15.....Joins Education Secretary Zrike and American Federation of Teachers Massachusetts President Jessica Tang for a roundtable discussion and to announce grants for schools to promote safe social media use and support student mental health. A media availability follows at 9:50 a.m. RSVP to ayub.tahlil@mass.gov.....Peabody Memorial Veterans High School, 485 Lowell St, Peabody

11:00.....Joins Lt. Gov. Driscoll to present the 43rd Annual Trooper George L. Hanna Memorial Awards for Bravery.....House Chamber

Daily Events

7:00....POSTPONED DUE TO NEW CONTRACT OFFER.....Nearly 4,000 Brigham and Women's Hospital nurses are slated to begin their open-ended strike after contract negotiations did not produce an agreement.....75 Francis St., Boston

9:00.....Public Health Council holds a virtual meeting. Agenda includes updates from Commissioner Goldstein and a vote on a determination of need for a request by Beth Israel Lahey Health "for a significant capital expenditure and a substantial change in service." Lahey Hospital and Medical Center in Burlington is seeking approval to construct a new inpatient unit with 36 new medical/surgical beds and eight observation beds, and construct one new cardiac catheterization/electrophysiology producer laboratory on the hospital's main campus. It also wants to acquire one new computed tomography unit for operation at the hospital's satellite location in Peabody. The proposed expenditure sits at $79.5 million, according to a document featuring determination of need projects before the Department of Public Health. The Council is also expected to consider regulations to implement a two-year-old law that directed the state to consider out-of-state issues when weighing a nursing home license, which the Healey administration announced on the heels of a media report that faulted the state's oversight of nursing home transactions.....Agenda and Access

9:30.....MassDOT Board of Directors Finance and Audit Committee holds a meeting.....More Info and Access

10:00.....Boston Mayor Michelle Wu, Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley, Housing and Livable Communities Secretary Juana Matias and Rep. Rob Consalvo announce $16 million in city, state and federal funding to modernize the Fairmount public housing community in Hyde Park. The project include accessibility improvement, deep energy retrofits, heating system improvements and "substantial investments" in green infrastructure, according to Wu's office.....Fairmount Basketball Court, 2 Bow St., Hyde Park

10:30.....Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission's legislative subcommittee meets to discuss legislation to refile in the 2027-2028 session and a new bill for next session.....PERAC, 10 Cabot Road, Suite 300, Medford | Virtual Access

10:30.....Congressman Neal and Worcester Community Action Council Head Start Director Kathleen Dour tour the East Brookfield Head Start program. The Trump administration has proposed eliminating federal quality standards for Head Start classrooms, shortening Head Start operating hours, and eliminating enrollment protections for children with disabilities.....410 E. Main St., East Brookfield

11:00.....Executive Office of Public Safety and Security hosts the Trooper George L. Hannah Memorial Awards for Bravery ceremony. Hannah was shot and killed during a traffic stop in Auburn in 1983.....Great Hall

11:00....Massachusetts Water Resources Authority meets. The board will announce finalists for the executive director job. Interim Executive Director Stephen Estes-Smargiassi has helmed the quasi-public agency since longtime director Fred Laskey retired in May.....Virtual

11:00....."Boston Public Radio" hosts a debate about Question 5, the ballot measure that would change the state tax revenue limit and potentially fuel more frequent taxpayer rebates. Supporter Chris Keohan from Taxpayers for an Affordable Massachusetts and opponent Phineas Baxandall from the Mass Budget & Policy Research Center debate.....GBH Boston Public Library Studio, 700 Boylston St., Boston | GBH 88.7 FM | Livestream

11:30.....As part of his Community Mental Health Tour, Health and Human Services Secretary Kiame Mahaniah visits the Community Behavioral Health Center that's operated by The Brien Center.....334 Fenn St., Pittsfield

11:30.....Congressman Neal joins East Brookfield Select Board members and town officials to highlight how federal funding from the American Rescue Plan Act, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act supported local projects.....Memorial Town Complex, 122 Connie Mack Drive, East Brookfield

12:00.....Utility Contractors Association of New England has a briefing on the "practical and policy challenges facing Massachusetts water infrastructure." Jay Ash, president of the Massachusetts Competitive Partnership, moderates a panel with Lowell City Manager Tom Golden, Springfield Water and Sewer Commission Executive Director Josh Schimmel and CREDA Massachusetts President Tamara Small.....Room 428

1:00.....Senate Committee on the Census holds a public hearing on the U.S. Census Bureau's recent proposals to update questions for the 2030 census, including eliminating questions about race, ethnicity and sexual orientation, as well as excluding most non-citizens from apportionment counts. The bureau also wants to