



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

STATE HOUSE, BOSTON 02133-1053

SENATOR STEVEN A. BADDOUR

FIRST ESSEX DISTRICT

ROOM 208

TEL. (617) 722-1604

FAX. (617) 722-1999

E-Mail: Steven.Baddour@state.ma.us

CHAIRMAN:

TRANSPORTATION

VICE-CHAIRMAN:

THE JUDICIARY

MEMBER:

WAYS AND MEANS
POST AUDIT AND OVERSIGHT
GLOBAL WARMING AND CLIMATE
CHANGE
CONSUMER PROTECTION AND
PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE
FEDERAL STIMULUS

Contact: Eleni Varitimos

(617) 722-1604

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Senator Baddour FY'11 Budget Amendments

Amendments focus on tax savings and government accountability

May, 25, 2010, Boston, MA - State Senator Steven A. Baddour (D-Methuen) released his budget amendments for the Fiscal Year 2011 Annual Budget, to show he has honored his commitment to not file any amendments or request additional earmarks for any programs or projects that increase the "bottom line". Instead, Senator Baddour filed amendments that focus on tax savings and increasing government accountability.

"Unfortunately, our economy has been slow to recover and many families still feel they are at the breaking point. Experts say that this is a jobless recovery, which for most, is no recovery at all", said Senator Baddour. "The Legislature must strive to strike a better balance between what people pay in taxes and what they receive in return. Taxpayers, who feel nickel-and-dimed by government, are paying far more of their hard earned dollars for fewer services, while special interests and wasteful programs continue to receive more and more. We must keep our state affordable for working families, seniors, and those just entering the workforce. Government must realize that it cannot tax itself into a recovery because we are reaching a point where the private sector can no longer afford to subsidize the public sector and vice-versa."

Last year Senator Baddour voted against increasing the state's sales tax from 5% to 6.25%. He also voted against proposed increases to the income tax and gas tax.

Amendments to the Budget will be debated in the Senate this week before House and Senate leadership assign members to a "conference committee" to negotiate the differences between the House and Senate bills. For more information about the budget process, click [here](#).

Senator Baddour FY'11 Amendments as Filed:

Amendment #49:

Sponsors: Tisei, Baddour et. al.

Title: Sales Tax Rollback

This amendment would roll back the state's sales tax from 6.25% to 5.0%

Amendment #99:

Sponsor: Baddour

Title: False Reports

Restraining orders - designed to protect against domestic violence or stalking - have in many cases been used to separate fathers from their children, gain a tactical advantage in divorce proceedings, or simply to exact revenge when no demonstrable threat exists.

Currently the penalty for filing a false report of a crime to a police officer is punishable by a fine of not less than \$100 nor more than \$500 or by imprisonment in a jail or house of correction for not more than 1 year or both. This amendment would add a new section to Chapter 209A that would allow the filing of a false restraining order to be treated as a form of perjury and punished under those standards.

Amendment #208

Sponsors: Hedlund, Baddour

Title: Repeal of Alcohol Sales Tax

This amendment would repeal the newly imposed 6.25% sales tax on alcohol.

Amendment #445

Sponsor: Baddour (similar amendments filed by Tarr and Moore)

Title: Inmate Fees

This amendment requires the Department of Corrections and the Sheriffs in our county system to charge a custodial care fee of \$5 a day for prisoners housed in their care or custody. Sheriff Thomas Hodgson of Bristol County implemented a fee system from 2002 to 2004 and collected \$750,000 from inmates. It was an effective tool to generate much needed revenue and the administrative costs were minimal. However, the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled

that Sheriff Hodgson lacked the authority to charge inmates. This amendment would provide that ability.

Amendment #505

Sponsor: Baddour

Title: MBTA Efficiencies

The passage of the Transportation Reform Act of 2009 created a single, unified and accountable Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) to streamline operations, share services and reduce costs. In recent statements, the Secretary for Administration and Finance, over \$100 million dollars have already been realized in savings as a result in Transportation Reform. One area, however, still in need of attention is the MBTA.

Although its Board of Directors was restructured and its planning office streamlined and coordinated with the other divisions of MassDOT, it needs further refinement. This amendment would require the MBTA to adopt the same delegation of authority regulations as the MassDOT Board. For example, the MassDOT Board of Directors is required to approve contracts and payment for goods and non-professional services above \$5M. In contrast, the MBTA is burdened with approving similar services at a mere \$500,000; an inefficient and arbitrary threshold.

The amendment also includes other technical corrections that restate the MBTA's goal of focusing on the organizations financial situation and customer service, not day-to-day management.

Amendment #533

Sponsor: Baddour

Title: EBT Purchases

This amendment prohibits individuals receiving financial assistance through the Department of Transitional Assistance from purchasing alcohol and tobacco products using their EBT cards. The amendment also requires the department to monitor EBT usage on a monthly basis to determine if the practice has ceased and punish stores that allow such transactions.

Amendment #534

Sponsor: Baddour

Title: Welfare Reform 1

Today, if someone fraudulently receives payments or services through the Department of Transitional Assistance this crime is investigated by the Bureau of Special Investigators of the Auditor's office – not local or state police departments. Additionally, the current penalty for anyone found abusing the system is the placement of a lien on their property for monies owed and/or civil action to obtain the money owed, with interested, filed by the Attorney General.

This amendment allows police officers to investigate welfare fraud as well as creates a new category of punishment for those found guilty of this crime – a sentence of up to 2 ½ years in a house of correction. It also mandates that health care providers report suspicions of welfare abuse and fraud to the bureau of special investigators and the police, as they readily encounter situations whereby patients fake illnesses to continue receiving benefits.

Amendment #543

Sponsor: Baddour

Title: Welfare Reform 3

This amendment would suspend any payments or services rendered by the Department of Transitional Assistance to anyone that fails to appear in court on a summons or has a warrant issued against them. Payments and services would resume once the person appears in court.

###