

## **Notes from Beacon Hill**

### State Representative Kate Hogan

The legislature is back in swing and, therefore, so are my columns! House members are still waiting for committee assignments, but I can provide an overview of events in the first week of formal session, along with a summary of my activities to date.

**House Rules: Transparency, Accountability, Dress Code, and Godspeed:** Last week, my colleagues and I took up the rules of engagement for the next two years in the first formal session of the House of Representatives. We unanimously passed new rules designed to promote accountability, transparency, efficiency, and decorum.

The rules include a comprehensive procurement process for all House purchases in excess of \$50,000: the bill also allows public review of any procurement or contract in excess of \$5,000. The rules will also subject financial accounts to an independent audit each fiscal year. Rules now require that roll calls remain open for a minimum of five minutes. We also adopted a rule that requires members and staff “to dress in proper and appropriate attire” when in the Chamber. These rules all build on last session's landmark rules reform package.

The session ended with Speaker DeLeo thanking our newly elected colleague from Beverly, Representative Jerry Parisella, for his service as he heads to active duty in Iraq this month. We look forward to Rep. Parisella's safe return and his maiden speech!

**Caucus activity and liaison work at the State House:** Legislative caucuses are utilized by legislators to organize resources around important issues. These groups represent a variety of issues and approaches and they allow for discussion of bills that deserve support, the identification of budget line items that should be protected, and the development of strategies for future bills and programs.

I will be serving as the chair of the Library Caucus this year, as we deal with budget cuts and threats of library closings. Speaker DeLeo has also appointed me to serve on the Massachusetts State Library Board of Trustees.

Representative Jen Benson and I will Co-chair the Elder Caucus, which will continue to advocate for legislation, budget line items, and program funding for seniors. The caucus also offers educational forums to help legislators and their staff better assist their constituents.

I also serve on the Metrowest, Aviation, and Higher Education Caucuses.

Finally, I have also been appointed as the legislative liaison to The Massachusetts Interagency Coordinating Council. This federally mandated statewide inter-agency group advises the Department of Public Health on issues related to Early Intervention services.

**Bills, Public Transportation, and Bonds:** Last Friday, January 21st at 7:00 PM, was the deadline for filing bills to be heard in the new legislative session. These bills have two years to live: two years to find their way through hearings and to the floor for a final vote. Bills not passed by both chambers and signed into law by the governor, by the end of the biennial session, become “refiles” for next session.

I filed 15 bills that I will work very hard to see enacted this session. These bills include: changes or additions to regulations that would help small business; tax and insurance assistance to seniors; domestic violence and Heather's Bill; greater access to the GIC; and the safety of school children. I will continue working on public transportation issues and I will be working with our new State Treasurer on a bond-related project, the details of which I look forward to sharing with you soon. I will be writing more about all of these issues and other co-sponsored legislation in the weeks ahead.

*Kate Hogan is proud to serve the 3<sup>rd</sup> Middlesex Towns of Bolton, Hudson, Maynard, and Stow in the Massachusetts House of Representatives. Please send your comments to [Kate.Hogan@mahouse.gov](mailto:Kate.Hogan@mahouse.gov).*