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LOCAL COLLEGE STUDENTS COMPLETE GOVERNOR PATRICK'S WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

SPRINGFIELD – Tuesday, August 21, 2012 – Governor Deval Patrick's Western Massachusetts Regional Office today announced that ten interns have completed the 2012 *Governor's Western Massachusetts Intra-Agency Summer Internship Program*. The internship program provides college students with the opportunity to learn and engage in state government while also providing students with a practicum that will enhance academic and professional development.

"I congratulate these amazing young leaders on their hard work this summer to help create a better Commonwealth," said Governor Patrick. "Their commitment to civic engagement makes them incredible role models for the next generation."

The following interns completed the program:

Amherst:

Alexander D. Schaffer, University of Massachusetts Amherst

Chicopee:

Craig J. Presnal Jr., Emmanuel College

Easthampton:

Nicola Helems, Westfield State University

Holyoke:

Nicholas R. Fitzgerald, University of Massachusetts Amherst

Terrence J. Smith, College of the Holy Cross

Pittsfield:

Ashley Wich, Wheaton College

Springfield:

Blake A. Davis, Nichols College

Michael S. Jusino, Springfield Technical Community College

Cesia Lopez, Springfield Technical Community College

Dana Murray, American International College

The initiative ran from May 31 to August 17 and was a partnership between the Governor's Western Massachusetts Office and several state agencies including the Department of Transportation, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Transitional Assistance, the Department of Revenue (Child Support and Taxpayers Services), the Department of Early Childhood and Education, the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination and the Department of Housing and Community Development. The internship also included field contact with visits to the Massachusetts State House, Quabbin Reservoir, Early Childhood Center in Springfield, tours of ongoing tornado rebuilding projects in Maple High Six Corners of Springfield, the Hampden County House of Corrections as well as conversations with state and local administrators and elected officials.

"I came to Governor Patrick's internship program with a sense of things concerning government that was both skewed and incorrect. I walked out with a deep and proud understanding of the great work done every day by the Patrick-Murray Administration to make our Commonwealth stronger," said summer intern Alex Shaffer, a UMass Amherst student from Chicopee. "I thank the internship and all the exceptional people I met along the way for that."

"Interning at the Governor's Western Massachusetts Office has provided me with valuable tools that will serve me in my

professional endeavors," said summer intern Cesia Lopez, a Springfield Technical Community College student from Springfield. "I observed professionals whose guidance cultivated my understanding and appreciation of government, while gaining practical experience in areas such as research, outreach and writing projects. I worked closely with constituents and saw how government facilitates change in our communities in a variety of capacities. I'm honored to have been a part of the program!"

In January 2008, Governor Patrick re-opened the Governor's Western Massachusetts Office in Springfield. Open on a full-time basis, the office addresses constituent concerns and provides a vital link between the State House and the western part of the state. Earlier this summer, the Governor's office announced staff will also be available to meet with constituents once a month in Pittsfield.

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