
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

FROM THE OFFICE OF SENATOR JAMES F. BURKE
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ROOM 332, STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

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The following is the text of the budget statement by Senator James F. Burke, Chairman, Senate Ways and Means:--

Mr. President:

The Committee on Ways and Means submits herewith its budget recommendations for fiscal year 1971. It totals \$1,622,149,383. This represents an increase of \$2,183,604 compared to the House recommendations of \$1,619,965,779 and a decrease of \$15,574,238 compared to the recommendations of the Governor in House One.

The situation of the Senate is similar to what has happened in the past few years. Greatly increased recommendations, extremely limited time and lack of sufficient data to evaluate in depth the expenditures of the Commonwealth, have forced us to report these budget recommendations more rapidly than we would have liked.

The Committee has held hearings with all major departments over the past few months. From their testimony and the testimony presented to the Committee by other experts, there seems little likelihood of reducing expenditures of state government. Demands of more services, increased costs of regular services and spiralling inflation have added to the difficulties.

The budget is in balance. Revenues are adequate to meet our expenditures. However, I should like to call your attention to House Bill 5615, page six, table two which shows that the estimated surplus at the beginning of fiscal year 1971 is approximately \$45 million while the balance or estimated surplus for the beginning of fiscal 1972 is \$16 million. This does not take into con-

sideration any supplementary or deficiency appropriations for the next fiscal year. In other words, the state is digging into the projected surplus. This certainly should be a warning sign to all of us. New or expanded programs no matter how meritorious or desirable must be considered in light of our revenue.

I shall try to highlight the amendments made by the Committee on Ways and Means in the order of the amendments.

The Comptrollers Division embarked upon a program of updating our accounting system six years ago. This has proven to be a more difficult task than Administration and Finance had originally anticipated. The Committee has made an attempt to eliminate consultants and train and improve state employees in this division.

Incidentally, I should like to call to your attention the problem the Committee finds still exists. It is that of electronic data processing. We feel that excessive amounts of so-called hardware—computers—are being rented by the Commonwealth. Dead time or unused time seems to be prevalent in many of our state agencies.

The Committee has asked the Executive Department to give a critical and thorough analysis to this problem and meet with us in the recess. In the meantime, a moratorium on expansion in this area has been agreed upon by Administration and Finance.

The medical and dental school scholarships had to be increased in order to provide for the usual number of medical school students the Commonwealth assists each year. This was due to the increased tuition charges.

The printing costs for ballots and information to voters by the Secretary of State has risen sharply in the past few years and the Committee had to add \$150,000 to this account.

A long standing problem facing the Executive Department and the Legislature has been that of the so-called temporary or "02" employee. Legislation that would establish as permanent, a temporary position that has been in existence for a period of three years or longer and which by its nature is not really temporary, has failed to pass for the last three years.

It is the opinion of this Committee that this method of handling new positions creates undue hardship on employees, unnecessary paper work and delays for the Bureau of Personnel and the Division of Civil Service as well as the Legislature. Thus, in this bud-

get the House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means have—by budget action changed many positions from temporary to permanent to partially alleviate this problem for all concerned.

Certain accounts in Public Welfare have at the Governor's request been made "continuing accounts". This is usually against the policy of this Committee. However, the huge backlog of vendors' payments and the less than efficient administration of this department require that this be done for this year at least.

The Committee has also added several air pollution control districts throughout the state. The ecological problems of this state are very evident to all of us. Millions have been appropriated. Improvements and progress are slow. Much more will have to be done. This is an effort in that direction.

The two zoos that are operated by the Metropolitan District Commission at Franklin Park and Stoneham have deteriorated over the past few years. Critics have claimed that more professional direction and advice is necessary. We have recommended that \$200,000 be appropriated to the Commission to utilize the services of the Boston Zoological Society as consultants to upgrade and improve these zoos.

In the Department of Mental Health reorganization of 1966, the legislature established seven regions and thirty-seven areas within those regions. The Committee recommends the staffing of these areas to fulfill this requirement. Additional staffing for pre-nursery school clinics, mental health clinics and drug addiction clinics are also recommended.

Solid waste disposal which is part of the ecological problem I mentioned previously is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Public Works in cooperation with the Department of Public Health. In order to get this program operating the Committee increased this appropriation.

Again this year, the area of education presented a difficult program for the Committee to analyze. We have provided adequate teaching personnel in every institution of higher education to allow for admission of all qualified students that physical facilities will allow. In 1971, this will provide for approximately 74,000 students.

The Legislature has long recognized the needs and problems of the disadvantaged student. Not only scholarships of millions of dol-

lars have been appropriated but a pilot program at the University of Massachusetts has been instituted. It seems to the Committee that a program of this nature is essential but that more emphasis should be placed at the community college level. The program of the community colleges for the last ten years has been extremely successful for thousands of students. Its growth has been phenomenal and an excellent expenditure of the taxpayers' money. It provides a transitional educational experience between high school and higher education or a career. The greater proportion of these students transfer to a four year college or university and the record of success is outstanding. The Committee recommends that the major effort in the disadvantaged higher educational field be in this direction.

Accordingly, we have recommended a quarter of a million dollars for the Board of Regional Colleges to embark upon a larger scale of aid to disadvantaged students.

I must caution again that additions of any size to these recommendations with our present revenue may well unbalance this budget. I should hope that none would be added and that the recommendations of the Ways and Means Committee be adopted.