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## MTF Bulletin

May 26, 2023

### Senate Final FY 2024 Budget

After four days of debate, the Senate finalized its **\$55.9 billion** Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 budget; adding \$82.2 million in new spending and 34 outside policy sections.

The Senate took action on 1,049 amendments through a combination of standalone votes and amendment ‘bundles,’ which categorically approve or reject many amendments at once. In total, 478 amendments were adopted, 415 were rejected, and 156 were withdrawn from consideration. This brief summarizes Senate debate action and assesses the new spending and policy proposals.

#### *FY 2024 Senate Final Spending Summary*

	<b>FY 2024 Governor</b>	<b>FY 2024 House Final</b>	<b>SWM Budget</b>	<b>Senate Floor Spend</b>	<b>Senate Final Budget</b>
Line-Item Spending	\$54,777	\$54,947	\$55,364	\$82.2	\$55,446
Medical Asst. Trust Fund	\$505	\$505	\$505	\$0	\$505
Pre-Budget Transfers	\$6,899	\$6,899	\$6,899	\$0	\$6,899
Other Off-Budget & Assumed Supps	\$0	\$100	\$100	\$0	\$100
<b>Total Spend</b>	<b>\$62,181</b>	<b>\$62,451</b>	<b>\$62,868</b>	<b>\$82.2</b>	<b>\$62,950</b>

*\$ in millions*

The FY 2024 Senate Final budget now includes \$55.9 billion in total line-item spending, \$499.1 million more than the House Final budget and \$3.5 billion more than the FY 2023 budget as signed by the Governor. The Senate Final budget also increases spending over Governor Healey’s original proposal by \$668.9 million.

New spending in the Senate Final budget is primarily in the areas of Health and Human Services, Economic Development, and Education.

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### **Senate Debate – Spending Overview**

Through the adoption of 478 amendments, the Senate added \$82.2 million in new spending on the floor. This spending level is less than FY 2023 Senate floor spending by \$11.1 million, and less than the House debate spending level of \$129.7 million by \$47.5 million.

Approximately 87 percent (\$71.8 million) in new spending is related to earmarks for specific communities, organizations, or programs; while 12.5 percent (\$10.3 million) is for programmatic increases or new line-items.

*FY 2024 Senate Floor Spending by Category*

Category	Earmark Spending	Non-Earmark Spending	Total Category Spend	# of Amendments
Energy & Environment	\$6.21	\$1.00	\$7.21	48
Economic Development	\$15.50	\$1.10	\$16.60	112
Education	\$6.80	\$4.71	\$11.51	75
Transportation	\$0.67	\$0.00	\$0.67	10
Public Safety	\$6.45	\$2.15	\$8.60	43
Government	\$0.73	\$0.00	\$0.73	8
Health & Human Services	\$21.88	\$1.25	\$23.13	108
Other	\$5.40	\$0.00	\$5.40	8
Judiciary	\$1.60	\$0.10	\$1.70	3
Local	\$6.61	\$0.00	\$6.61	63
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$71.84</b>	<b>\$10.31</b>	<b>\$82.15</b>	<b>478</b>

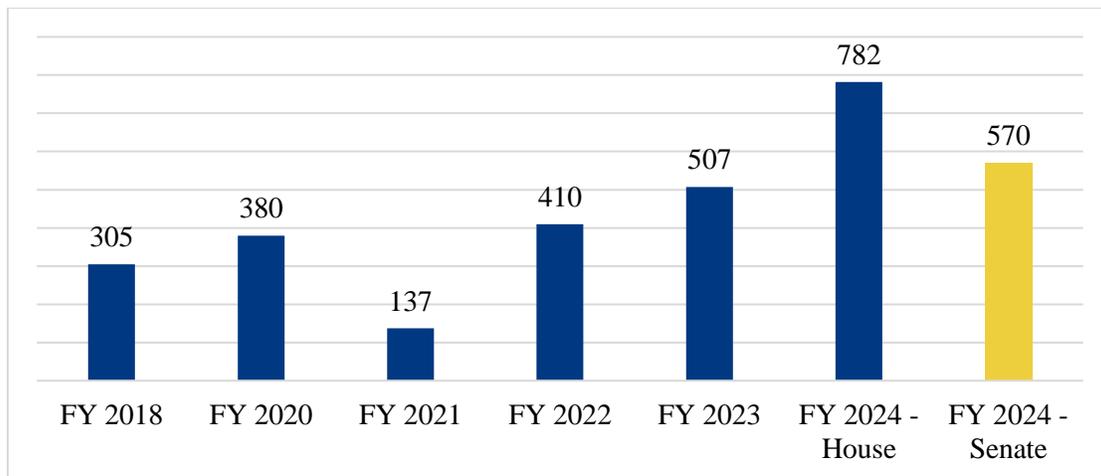
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**Earmark Spending**

The Senate added 570 earmarks to its budget during debate, comprising \$71.8 million in new spending. The majority of earmarks (479) support local communities, projects, and organizations and represent \$38.6 million in new spending. Approximately 91 earmarks fund larger, statewide programs within existing line items. For example, the Senate adopted a \$1 million earmark to support food system literacy in K-12 schools across the Commonwealth.

This number of added earmarks is greater than the 507 added to the FY 2023 Senate Final budget, and less than the number of earmarks added to the FY 2024 House Final budget by 212.

*Senate Earmarks Added by Year, FY 2018 – FY 2024*



In FY 2024, the median local earmark cost adopted by the Senate was \$60,000. While most local earmarks carry a modest cost, combined they make up a significant portion of spending. Earmarks provide one-time benefits for a variety of important purposes across the state, but they also limit

the resources available for other uses. For example, earmark spending may come at the expense of grant programs that fund similar projects using more transparent metrics. In addition, earmark spending is often unevenly distributed across projects and areas of the state, contributing to geographic inequity.

The number of earmarks added to the Senate budget is greater than the number of adopted amendments because one amendment may contain multiple earmarks.

*FY 2024 Senate Earmark Spending by Category*

Category	Earmark Spending	# of Earmarks
Energy & Environment	\$6.21	49
Economic Development	\$15.50	131
Education	\$6.80	69
Transportation	\$0.67	6
Public Safety	\$6.45	46
Government	\$0.73	4
Health & Human Services	\$21.88	91
Other	\$5.40	53
Judiciary	\$1.60	9
Local	\$6.61	112
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$71.84</b>	<b>570</b>

*\$ in millions*

**Other Notable Spending**

The Senate added \$10.3 million in non-earmark spending, including funds for new line-items and larger programs. Notable programmatic funding increases include:

- ***Massachusetts Emergency Food Assistance Program*** (Amendment #41) – Adds \$1 million for the emergency food assistance program, known as MEFAP. This program supports partnerships between regional food banks and a food distribution network of over 894 emergency food providers.
- ***Meals on Wheels*** (Amendment #394) – Provides \$1 million for the Meals on Wheels program, which provides nutritionally balanced meals to older adults in the Commonwealth.
- ***Civics Project Trust Fund*** (Amendment #651) – Transfers \$1 million to the Civics Project Trust Fund, created by *An Act to Promote and Enhance Civic Engagement* passed in 2018. The trust fund supports the creation of a statewide civics curriculum, as well as professional development for educators.
- ***Hunger Free Campus Initiative*** (Amendment #663) – Dedicates \$1 million for a new hunger free campus initiative to address food insecurity at public community colleges and state universities. The Department of Higher Education is authorized to award grants to

campuses to maximize student enrollment in federal nutrition benefit programs, increase access to meal options, and improve collaboration with regional food banks.

- ***State Aid to Regional Public Libraries*** (Amendment #688) – Increases funding for state aid to regional libraries by \$750K.
- ***Massachusetts Downtown Initiative*** (Amendment #245) – Creates a new technical assistance program to promote walkable downtowns in the Commonwealth, funded at \$600K.

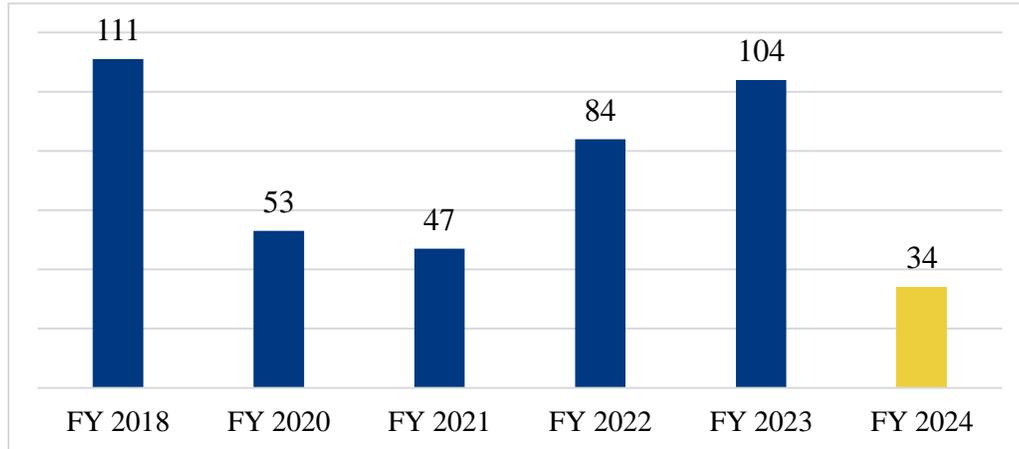
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### Senate Debate – Policy Sections

During Senate debate, 34 new policy sections were added to the budget through the adoption of 27 amendments.

*Senate Policy Sections Added by Year*



Notable outside policy sections:

- ***Community Preservation Trust Fund*** (Amendment #66) – Requires the Comptroller to transfer \$30 million to the Massachusetts Community Preservation Trust Fund, prior to the certification of the FY 2023 consolidated net surplus. This trust fund provides matching funds to municipalities that have adopted the Community Preservation Act.
- ***Tenancy Preservations*** (Amendment #176) – Amends Section 35 of the SWM budget to clarify and strengthen the eviction protections related to applicants for emergency rental assistance. Included in the language is a requirement to notify the newly created Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities that an eviction judgement is pending due to an unresolved application for emergency rental assistance.
- ***Accelerated Repair Program Cap Exemption*** (Amendment #601) – Excludes grants made by the Massachusetts School Building Authority for the Accelerated Repair Program from the \$1.2 billion grant cap proposed by the Senate. The House proposed increasing the MSBA grant cap to \$1.1 billion, inclusive of Accelerated Repair Program grants.

- ***Debt Limit Exception for School Building Projects*** (Amendment #647) – Allows for debt authorized by a city or town to pay for the costs of a school building project, not funded by the MSBA, to be excluded from the municipality’s debt limit. Authorized debt for school building projects participating in the MSBA project pipeline is currently excluded from local debt limits; this language provides parity for all school building projects.
- ***Mobility Pricing Commission*** (Amendment #800) – Creates a special commission to investigate, study, and make recommendations on the development of regionally-equitable public transportation, roadway, and congestion pricing. The new commission is directed to file a report with its findings by July 1, 2025.
- ***Chief Medical Examiner Oversight of Child Deaths*** (Amendment #912) – Requires the Chief Medical Examiner to review and approve the findings of, as well as any changes to, an autopsy report for a child under the age of two. This proposal was also adopted by the House, and passed as standalone legislation in the Senate last session.

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## **Budget Resources**

Between FY 2020 and FY 2023, the Senate added an average of \$77 million in new spending during the debate process. FY 2024 Senate floor spending is slightly higher than that average at \$82.2 million, but less than FY 2023 actual floor spending by \$11.1 million.

The Senate final budget makes no adjustments to the consensus tax revenue estimate agreed to in January.

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## **Bottom Line**

The Senate added \$82.2 million in new spending over the course of four days of debate; increasing total spending to \$55.9 billion. The Senate also added 34 outside section policies to their budget, primarily focused on creating new task forces and commissions, as well as creating greater flexibility for funding school building projects.

With the passage of the Senate Final budget, the Legislature now begins the Conference Committee process. Over the next few weeks, House and Senate budget negotiators must reconcile all differences between the two spending plans. One wrinkle in this year’s Conference Committee process will be accommodating both branches’ surtax spending proposals within the shared \$1 billion cap. The budgets passed by the House and Senate each include only \$1 billion in surtax spending; however, only \$449 million in spending is on shared priorities. Additionally, the FY 2024 final budget will be negotiated at the same time that the two branches begin to engage in discussions on tax relief.

MTF will be releasing a Conference Committee preview in the coming weeks to discuss the obstacles facing budget negotiators and highlight key spending and policy priorities for the Foundation.