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Baddour fighting to fundamentally reform state government

*Joins on to comprehensive, long-term plan for
government accountability*

BOSTON - Working to restore credibility and promote efficiency in state government, Senator Steven A. Baddour (D-Methuen) is teaming up with Senator Richard T. Moore (D-Uxbridge) to advance a four-part plan that could save millions of dollars for Massachusetts taxpayers. The legislative package has garnered nearly 20 co-sponsors among Senator Baddour's legislative colleagues.

The proposals, which will be offered both as legislation and as budget provisions, seek to give the public opportunities to suggest reform or abolition of state agencies and programs. All are designed to force state bureaucrats to justify the work of their agencies or face abolition. One proposal resulted from a recent WBZ-TV I-Team report about unused leased parking spaces for state employees.

"With the serious decline in state revenues, we need to ensure that state agencies function on a more cost-effective basis," Senator Baddour stated. "Scarce revenue dollars require new, innovative approaches to public program management. Furthermore, when the economy improves, there will be pressure to restore all of the cuts and personnel, but the state needs a plan to evaluate and prioritize state programs and services. We must not simply go back to 'doing

business as usual,” Baddour continued, “when the revenue picture improves.” He said that taxpayers deserve to know that every program that receives public funding is needed and that services are being delivered in the most efficient manner.

The proposals being offered include:

Sunset of State Agencies

Texas, Florida and a several other states have laws that require all state agencies to terminate after a set amount of years, unless affirmatively re-authorized by the Legislature. Texas has saved nearly \$800 million in the past twenty-seven years, consolidated 12 agencies and abolished 58 agencies. The proposal in Massachusetts would assign mandatory sunset dates for each agency, provide an opportunity for stakeholders and the public to comment on how well the agency performs its duties, and give the Legislature the opportunity to decide if the agency should be abolished, reformed, or consolidated.

Sunshine on State Agency Reports

Over the years, as state agencies and departments have been established or re-organized, the Legislature has required these agencies to issue annual reports. The reports, often printed and distributed at considerable expense, rarely give legislators and the public an opportunity to evaluate the agency or provide a common sense report card on the need, success or failure of agency programs. Senator Baddour has proposed that agencies no longer print and distribute annual reports, but provide the reports electronically on the Internet with provisions for public feedback.

Improving State Program Performance

Last year, during debate on the FY '10 state budget, Senate approval was granted for an amendment that would have created pilot projects for examining the efficiency and performance of selected state programs. Unfortunately, the proposal was dropped during negotiations with the House on the final budget package. The proposal has state programs evaluated by trained examiners from the private sector using performance quality standards developed by the Department of Commerce National Institute for Standards and Technology in the prestigious Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Program. The standards, often used to evaluate private and non-profit organizations, would have state agencies partner with senior leaders committed and focused on long-term sustainability and improving overall organizational performance.

Preventing Waste in State Agency Leasing

A recent WBZ-TV I-Team investigation revealed that millions of tax dollars are being wasted by state agencies for leasing parking spaces around the state, which are often unused or being misused. There is, at present, no provision in these leasing and rental agreements to provide for an evaluation and periodic review of the need for the leased or

rented facilities or the termination of such agreements when they cannot be justified. The proposed legislation would require the director of the agencies to exercise more common sense in the procurement of parking spaces and facilities rental.

Joining Senator Baddour in co-sponsoring these bills are: Sen. Richard T. Moore, D-Uxbridge; Sen. Michael O. Moore, D-Millbury; Sen. Brian A. Joyce, D-Milton; Sen. Thomas P. Kennedy, D-Brockton; Sen. Marc R. Pacheco, D-Taunton; Sen. Susan C. Tucker, D-Andover; Rep. Cory Atkins, D-Chelmsford; Rep. Jennifer Benson, D-Lunenburg; Rep. Jennifer Callahan, D-Sutton; Rep. Katherine Clark, D-Wakefield; Rep. Thomas Calter, D-Kingston; Rep. John V. Fernandes, D-Milford; Rep. Anne Gobi, D-Ware; Rep. Lida Harkins, D-Needham; Rep. Kate Hogan, D-Stow; Rep. Paul McMurty, D-Dedham; Rep. James R. Miceli, D-Wilmington; and Rep. Michael F. Rush, D-Boston.

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