

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
MASSACHUSETTS SENATE

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For Immediate Release

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State Senate Task Force Holds Events on Cape & Islands Retail Economy

Senators Cyr Hosts Colleagues to Learn about the Region's Business Climate

(Hyannis, MA): The Massachusetts State Senate Task Force on Strengthening Local Retail visited Cape Cod today to meet with small businesses and the general public to hear about the regional retail economy and learn what steps the Senate could take to strengthen local retail business on Cape Cod, Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard. The Task Force held a hearing in Hyannis at Alberto's Ristorante, located on Main Street that was hosted by Senator Cyr (D-Truro). The task force also met for lunch with local business owners at Land Ho! Harwich Port. And task force members visited local businesses in Harwich Port with leaders from the Harwich Chamber of Commerce.

"Small retailers are the center of our towns and regional economy," said Senator Cyr. "Local retail shop owners are struggling to maintain a decent share of the market, while competing with the pervasiveness of online shopping. Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket experience the added difficulty of navigating seasonal fluctuations. I am grateful to be a member of this task force to give a voice to our communities."

Last September former Senate President Stanley Rosenberg (D-Amherst) and Minority Leader Bruce Tarr (R-Gloucester) appointed the task force members, which included bipartisan representation from the state Senate and business leaders from the private sector. The task force was established to work with the Senate to identify ways to help local retailers become more competitive. Senator Michael Rodrigues (D- Westport) is the Chair of the Task Force and Senator Vinny deMacedo is the co-Chair.

"Today's tour of the Cape helped us better understand the regional challenges and opportunities facing the retail industry," said Senator Michael Rodrigues. "I look forward to continuing to work with my colleagues as we address the needs and priorities of small businesses and retailers around the state."

“The Cape Cod Chamber was pleased with the local response from local retailers, who shared their experiences and observations on how to bolster this important sector of our economy,” said Wendy Northcross Chamber CEO. “And we were able to share data with the task force on the critical importance of visitor spending in the Cape which generates a substantial portion of customers for many of our local shops and stores. We are grateful for their presence on the Cape this week to learn firsthand what is occurring in the industry here.”

The Task Force will address a number of key factors, including challenges faced by local retailers competing against online sellers, closures of local retailers and how that impacts local economies and property taxes, initiatives by local retailers to increase their market share and how state and local governments can encourage purchases from local retailers. The Task Force will report back to the Senate President and Senate Majority Leader by June 1, 2018.

Senator deMacedo was unable to attend today’s events, given the recent death of his father.

Senate Retail Task Force Members

Senators:

Senator Mike Rodrigues, Chair (D-Westport)
Senator Vinny deMacedo, Co-Chair (R-Plymouth)
Senator Julian Cyr (D-Truro)
Senator Don Humason (R-Westfield)
Senator Katie O’Connor Ives (D-Newburyport)
Senator Mike Barrett (D-Lexington)
Senator Jason Lewis (D-Winchester)

Business Leaders:

John Hurst, Retailers Assc of Mass
Judy Herrell, owner of Herrell’s Ice Cream in Northampton
Peter Kavanaugh of La-Z-Boy Furniture Galleries in Dartmouth
Barry S. Rotman, Board Chair of Rotman’s Furniture in Worcester
Malcolm Sherman, a retail consultant
Christopher Carlozzi, State Director of the National Federation of Independent Business
John Cahill of Landry & Arcani Rugs in Salem
Christopher Connolly, President of the Massachusetts State Automobile Dealers Association
Jim Carvalho, Political Director of the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1445
Harris Gruman, Executive Director of the SEIU Massachusetts State Council

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