



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
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Senator Cyr Legislation FY2018 and FY2019

The Cape and Islands Water Protection Fund:

The Massachusetts Legislature passed *An Act Regulating and Insuring Short Term Rentals*, which expanded the scope of the state's room occupancy excise tax and local option excise tax to include short-term transient accommodations.

Included in the short-term rental legislation was a landmark amendment establishing the Cape Cod and Islands Water Protection Fund (CIWPF). State Senator Julian Cyr (D-Truro) led the successful effort to establish the CIWPF in the Senate and State Representative Sarah Peake (D-Provincetown) spearheaded the CIWPF in the House. Both Cyr and Peake had the full support of the Cape and Islands Delegation, along with business leaders, environmentalists, the Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce, municipal officials and numerous community stakeholders who worked together to envision and support the establishment of the fund.

As the result of a 2011 lawsuit filed by the Conservation Law Foundation, Cape Cod towns are legally mandated to develop and build wastewater management systems to clean up nitrogen pollution. With an estimated price tag of \$4 billion to clean up and maintain good water quality on Cape Cod, CIWPF was developed for Barnstable, Dukes, and Nantucket Counties to provide funding assistance for critical municipal or regional water pollution abatement projects. Once signed into law, the CIWPF will provide millions in property tax relief for Cape Codders.

Opioid Law, *An Act for prevention and access to appropriate care and treatment of addiction*: This new law increases access to medication-assisted treatment, explores tools to reduce harm and save lives, expands prevention efforts, and addresses the high rates of co-occurring conditions of substance use disorder and mental illness.

Specifically, the expansion of access to medication-assisted treatment will be extended to emergency rooms and involuntary commitment facilities as well as a pilot in correctional facilities. Medication-assisted treatment includes methadone and buprenorphine, brand name Suboxone, which help stave off cravings for opioids, and Vivitrol, which blocks the effects of opioids.

The law also recognized the role of comprehensive treatment and prevention to address the high rates of co-occurring conditions of substance use disorder and mental illness. Specifically, the legislation creates a commission to establish a professional credential for recovery coaches. The bill also creates a Community-Based Behavioral Health Promotion and Prevention Trust Fund to promote positive mental, emotional and behavioral health among children and young adults and to prevent substance use disorders among children and young adults.

Senator Cyr Accomplishments:

Senator Cyr pushed to mandate medication assisted treatment (MAT) in emergency room settings, in the bill.

An amendment filed by Senator Cyr was adopted in the Senate that would protect, under the Good Samaritan statute, those who distribute or use narcotic testing products to assist an individual in determining whether drugs contain toxic substances. Narcotic testing products include, but are not limited to, fentanyl testing strips.

Municipal Police Training Bill: Championed by Senator Cyr, this legislation (H.4516) funds up to \$10,000,000 in annual revenue for municipal police training across Massachusetts. This funding will eliminate the responsibility of local communities to cover the cost of training police recruits.

Ocean Acidification: Senator Cyr and Rep. Fernandes both filed legislation relative to studying the acidification of our oceans in 2017. This legislation calls for a special commission to determine the extent to which coastal and ocean acidification impacts commercially valuable marine species along the Massachusetts coastline. The establishment of this commission would address critical scientific and general knowledge “gaps” that may hinder the Commonwealth’s ability to craft policy and other responses to coastal and ocean acidification. Senator Cyr was able to successfully propose the text of the bill as an amendment to the Environmental Bond Bill, which was signed into law by the Governor in August 2018.

Civics and Voting: The Legislature passed bills to foster an inclusive and just elections process by establishing automatic voter registration and a bill requiring schools to incorporate civics education with a focus on hand-on learning voting activities and media literacy.

Senator Cyr Accomplishment:

Senator Cyr successfully filed an amendment to Senate Bill 2355 (An Act to promote and enhance civic engagement), to help cities and towns increase youth participation in local government. This amendment asks the Secretary of the Commonwealth to disseminate information to cities and towns on ways they can include youth members in local boards (who are between the ages of 14 - 18 years old). This amendment was inspired by youth participation on municipal boards in Eastham. The amendment was unanimously adopted by the Senate and included in the final bill signed by the Governor.

The BRAVE Act for Veterans: Recognizing the sacrifice that military personnel and their families make not only while on active duty, but also after returning home, this law expands benefits and increases access to a range of services for veterans, active-duty military and their families.

The law grants paid military leave for those called to duty by the armed forces for up to 40 days for training and operation purposes. To help ease the costs of housing, the law changes the requirement for veterans to receive property tax exemptions from residing in the Commonwealth for five years down to two years. It also increases the amount a veteran can earn on their property tax exemption for volunteering in their city or town. It further exempts any veterans who receive annuities for service to their country from income calculations when applying for state programs or services.

Senator Cyr Accomplishment:

Senator Cyr filed amendments to this bill to extend retirement benefits and motor vehicle excise tax relief to National Guard and Reserve personnel. These amendments were developed from suggestions from Cape veterans, adopted in the Senate, and passed into law.

Consumer Protection: The Legislature passed a bill to put into place enhanced protections for consumers against data breaches, making it easier for consumers to monitor their credit and request security freezes on data. The bill requires entities that have been breached to limit fees associated with data breach protections as well as requires transparency from breached companies and their affiliates. In addition, breached entities are required to provide more detailed consumer notifications about data breaches and options to help consumers better protect themselves.

Senator Cyr Accomplishment:

Senator Cyr was successful in proposing an amendment to the bill which guarantees that Equifax or other bureaus that have been breached provide credit reports free of charge to consumers. Senator Cyr worked with Attorney General Healey's office to develop this amendment.

Protecting Women's Rights: The Legislature passed landmark legislation to guarantee reasonable accommodations and safety measures for pregnant workers. With an uncertain future for federal action on reproductive rights, the Legislature also took decisive action to repeal outdated state laws directed at limiting a woman's right to make decisions about her own reproductive health.

Worker's Rights and Small Businesses: The Legislature passed legislation to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour; create a framework for paid family and medical leave for most workers; and to establish a permanent sales tax holiday. The so called "grand bargain" was informed by the Senate's Task Force on Retail, which Senator Cyr served on and held hearings on Cape Cod.

Firearm Safety Legislation: The Legislature passed two bills to prevent tragic incidents involving firearms. The first implements a policy to prevent those individuals who pose a risk of causing bodily injury to themselves others from owning or possessing a firearm and provides them with crisis intervention, mental health, substance abuse, and counseling services. In addition the Legislature passed legislation banning the sale, purchase or ownership of a "bump stock" device, which is designed to increase a weapon's rate of fire and mimic automatic gun fire.

Criminal Justice Reform: The criminal justice reform law prioritizes public safety while maintaining principles of justice and sustainable policy. The law addresses disproportionately punitive policies by decriminalizing minor offenses and diverting minor offenses away from unnecessary incarceration but strengthens mandatory minimums for opioid trafficking.

The law also improves prison conditions by increasing transparency, reducing solitary confinement, and implementing policies to promote rehabilitation and reduce the odds of recidivism.

To strengthen public safety, the law strengthens protections for witnesses while also strengthening penalties and DNA collection procedures for certain violent crimes. To protect law enforcement officers, the bill creates a new crime and mandatory minimum term of imprisonment for assault and battery on a police officer which causes serious injury, and creates a police training program for bias-reduction and de-escalation.

Senator Cyr Accomplishments

Several amendments that Senator Cyr filed were adopted by the Senate and were passed into law. The amendments included provisions to protect the health and safety of LGBTQ prisoners.

Specifically, the law requires that transgender prisoners are housed and treated in a manner consistent with their gender identity, unless it would pose a safety risk to the prisoner or other prisoners. Another amendment creates a commission to evaluate current access to appropriate healthcare services and health outcomes for LGBTQ prisoners.

Another provision sponsored by Senator Cyr would expressly authorize the designation of youth probation officers, required to have youth-specific training and knowledge and resources targeted at offenders 18-26 years old. Research shows that this population merits specific intervention.

Health Care Reform: The Health Care Reform legislation passed by the Senate increased the availability of effective care delivery such as telemedicine and mobile integrated health to reduce emergency room visits and expanded provider versatility while also addressing price variation between larger hospitals and their smaller community hospital counterparts.

The legislation encompassed the whole system from Medicaid to the commercial market, addresses price variation, increased price transparency for consumers, leverages better federal funding opportunities, and expands scope of practice for many practitioners including dental therapists, optometrists, podiatrists, and nurse anesthetists. The bill also would have implemented greater oversight and transparency in drug costs and encourage Massachusetts to enter into bulk purchasing arrangements, including a multi-state drug purchasing consortium like other states, to lower costs and protect consumers.

Senator Cyr Accomplishments:

Senator Cyr sponsored a number of amendments that were included in the final version of the bill passed by the Senate.

One amendment to reauthorize and fund the highly successful Prevention and Wellness Trust Fund and another amendment that commits the Commonwealth to performing a comprehensive cost analysis of a single-payer system.

The Prevention and Wellness Trust Fund has supported health activities on Cape Cod, including the Barnstable Prevention Partnership which works to address health conditions specific to the local population, including: hypertension, falls from the elderly, and diabetes. In Barnstable County, 31.9% of adults have been told they have hypertension and 15.3% of adults on Cape Cod over the age of 56 have experienced a fall resulting in an injury. Prior to the creation of the Prevention and Wellness Trust Fund, there were no dedicated resources for a coordinated approach to address these common health challenges.

The Senate also adopted an amendment sponsored by Senator Cyr that charges the state with measuring the impact a single-payer system would have on the cost and delivery of health care in Massachusetts. The amendment was adopted by a bipartisan vote of 35-3 as part of a larger health care reform bill under consideration by the Senate.

Unfortunately the Senate's bill did not become law, as an agreement with the House was not reached in conference committee before the end of formal sessions on July 31, 2018.

Recreational Marijuana Implementation: The Legislature passed a bill in July 2017 to prepare the Commonwealth for legalized recreational marijuana, as a result of the successful ballot question passed by the voters in November 2016. The law mainly focused on areas related to the implementation of recreational marijuana that were not addressed by the ballot question

Senator Cyr Accomplishments:

Senator Cyr was successful in pushing for an amendment, in partnership with Rep. Fernandes, asking the Cannabis Control Commission to pay special attention to the unique circumstances residents on Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket face as this law is implemented.

Senator Cyr also worked with Rep. Peake to successfully propose an amendment that opens the marijuana market to small scale craft cultivators. The amendment lowers barriers to entry by enabling groups of small-scale growers to collaborate and share the costs associated with supplies, testing, processing, and packaging. It also includes regulations for safety, health, and security to increase consumer protection and ensure a high quality product.