



Senator Cindy F. Friedman
Chair, Joint Committee on Health Care Financing
Fourth Middlesex District

JANUARY 10, 2023

MASSACHUSETTS HEALTH POLICY FORUM ANNUAL STUDENT FORUM

ABOUT ME

MY BACKGROUND

- Elected in 2017
- Serve the 4th Middlesex district (Arlington, Billerica, Burlington, Woburn, and parts of Lexington)
- Have worked as a special education teacher, an executive in high-tech, and – prior to my election – as Chief of Staff to my predecessor, Senator Ken Donnelly
- Legislative priorities include lowering prescription drug prices, addressing the healthcare workforce crisis and the rising cost of healthcare, ensuring equity in our healthcare system, and reforming the treatment of criminal justice involved individuals with a mental illness



ABOUT ME

COMMITTEE AND COMMISSION ASSIGNMENTS

- Senate Chair, Joint Committee on Health Care Financing
- Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means
- Senate Vice Chair, Joint Committee on COVID-19 and Emergency Preparedness and Management
- Co-Chair, Senate Reproductive Working Group
- Member, Senate Committee on Ethics
- Member, Senate Committee on Personnel and Administration
- Member, Senate Committee on Rules
- Member, Middlesex County Restoration Center Commission



JOINT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE FINANCING PRIMARY COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENT

- Senate chair of the Joint Committee on Health Care Financing since 2019
- The Joint Committee on Health Care Financing includes 7 members of the Senate and 13 members of the House
- All bills must be publicly heard by a joint committee with relevant subject matter jurisdiction
- Both the Senate and House chairs of a joint committee maintain a lot of authority to move bills favorably or have the bill studied further



JOINT COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE FINANCING COMMITTEE WORK

- The Joint Committee on Health Care Financing is tasked with considering legislation concerning the direct funding of health care programs and any other Medicaid or public health assistance matters, fiscal matters relating to health care policy, and more.
- In the 2021-22 legislative session, major legislation included:
 - Mental health care access (signed into law)
 - Reproductive rights (signed into law)
 - Step therapy reforms (signed into law)
 - Pharmaceutical reforms (Senate passed)
 - Health care market oversight (House passed)



LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW IN MASSACHUSETTS

- Bill is introduced in either the House or the Senate prior to the filing deadline in the first year of the legislation session — for this session it's January 20, 2023.
- The bill is then reported to a joint committee with subject matter jurisdiction, where it must be publicly heard.
- A committee may vote to favorably or unfavorably move a bill. If moved favorably, the bill may travel to another committee, with the final committee stop being: the House or Senate Committee on Ways and Means or Committee on Rules.
- If also reported favorably out of the final committee, the bill must be debated in both chambers in order to move forward. Amendments may be filed by any legislator.
- If the bill passes both chambers but differs in substance, the Senate and House each appoint a 3 members to conference committee to iron out the differences and craft a final bill.
- If the final bill passes both chambers of the Legislature, it is sent to the Governor's desk, where she has 10 days to sign the bill into law or reject that version of the bill with an amendment or a veto.



REAL WORLD EXAMPLE — SIGNED INTO LAW

AN ACT ADDRESSING BARRIERS TO CARE FOR MENTAL HEALTH

- Timeline – Multiple Years and Legislative Sessions
 - Combination of bills from previous sessions
- Lead Stakeholders – Patients, Hospitals, Clinicians, Insurance Providers
- Catalyst – Years of neglect to a broken system that was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic
- Bill Highlights:
 - Guaranteed Annual Mental Health Wellness Exams
 - Enforcement of Mental Health Parity Laws
 - Addresses Emergency Department Boarding
 - 988 Implementation and 911 Expansion
 - Expands Access to Collaborative Care Model

REAL WORLD EXAMPLE — SIGNED INTO LAW

AN ACT EXPANDING PROTECTIONS FOR REPRODUCTIVE & GENDER-AFFIRMING CARE

- Timeline – 2.5 months
 - First introduced as a Senate budget amendment following the leaked *Dobbs* decision.
- Lead Stakeholders – Reproductive rights advocates, Medical providers, ACLU, Attorney General's office
- Catalyst – Supreme Court's decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade*
- Bill Highlights:
 - Designates reproductive health care and gender-affirming services as legally protected health care
 - Requires insurance coverage for abortion and abortion-related care
 - Clarifies language from the 2020 ROE Act for grave fetal diagnoses beyond 24 weeks
 - Expands access to medication abortion on state higher ed campuses





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QUESTIONS?