## Bureau Update



April/May 2009

## **State Quinn Bill Expenses Under Fire**

Boston only required to fund its half of Quinn Bill police salary costs

The House's FY10 state budget approved on May 1st restored \$25M of the state portion for the Quinn Bill salary benefits for local police officers. The total state share of \$52M had been eliminated in the House Ways and Means Committee's recommended budget. As it now stands, Boston may lose about half of the state reimbursement of \$10.7M expected in FY10. In future years, the City should pay only the share that it can be certain will be reimbursed by the Commonwealth.

The House appears ready to phase-out in September the Quinn Bill program by restricting funding to only existing eligible officers and those now enrolled in certified degree programs.

Previously, the state share of the Quinn Bill costs distributed to Boston in state aid was a reimbursement of half the salary costs paid by the City in the prior year. Thus, Boston should have received approximately \$10.7M in FY10 based on the full Quinn Bill payments it will make in FY09. Now it will receive less than half that amount if the House version prevails in the final state budget.

Boston is obligated by the police contracts negotiated in 1998 to pay its 50% share of Quinn Bill costs, but the contracts stipulate that the City does not have to pay the state portion of the funding if it is reduced or eliminated.

Beyond the annual Quinn Bill salary costs paid by Boston, police officer overtime and pension costs that are increased by the higher salaries must be absorbed by the City. Boston's Quinn Bill salary costs totaled approximately \$18.9M in FY07, \$20.4M in FY08 and the budget for FY09 is \$21.5M.

The Quinn Bill (Ch. 41, s.108L) is a local option salary benefit offered exclusively to uniformed police officers who earn a law enforcement, criminal justice or law degree. Eligible police officers are granted increases in base pay of 10%, 20% or 25% depending on the degree earned with no added duties.

The Menino Administration agreed to accept the Quinn Bill effective July 5, 2000 with the condition that the police unions agree to no salary increases in FY00 and FY01.

For about 130 police officers now eligible for a full pension because of age and years of service, these cuts in the state reimbursement for the Quinn Bill would reduce their pension eligible compensation starting in July and could cause them to accelerate their retirement plans.

The Research Bureau opposed the acceptance of the Quinn Bill in 1998 because of the lack of educational standards and benefits based on percent of salary rather than a specified dollar figure. *Special Report 03-6*. In 2003, the Board of Higher Education did approve guidelines for institutions offering Quinn Bill degrees.