

January 2009

Boston's 2009-2010 Legislative Package

Revenue bills re-filed but one-third of bills are new

The Mayor's [legislative package](#) for the 2009-2010 session of the General Court consists of 57 bills as well as support for seven bills filed by other elected officials. The bills are divided among nine broad categories such as public safety, economic development/job growth, housing and municipal revenues.

As expected, the City has re-filed its high profile revenue bills that would:

- Create a 2% local option meals tax that would generate approximately \$40M for Boston. The bill in the last session sought a 1% meals excise.
- Establish a 10% parking excise for use of off-street facilities which would produce an estimated \$25-\$28M for the City.
- Remove state tax exemptions for telephone/internet companies which would generate about \$5-7M for Boston.
- Remove the exempt status of property for commercial purposes on MBTA land.

The public safety, crime prevention and the rehabilitation of ex-offenders categories account for the largest number of bills (25). A few highlights include bills that would:

- Expand the list of crimes for which the police can take a DNA sample and allow police to take the sample at time of arrest
- Ease the transition of ex-offenders back into society with financial incentives for employees who hire former inmates and more funding for GED programs

- Provide concurrent jurisdiction on all MassPort Authority land for the local law enforcement agency
- Require all new firearms sold in state to bear serial numbers permanently inscribed on visible metal areas of firearm
- Require Registrar of Motor Vehicles to suspend/revoke license of person convicted of firearm arrest

Economic development and job growth bills would:

- Expand the definition of projects eligible to receive investment tax credits to include 121A projects
- Provide business tax breaks to employers who provide affordable workforce housing to their employees

Housing and neighborhood development bills would provide for:

- Tenant protections in foreclosed properties, just cause eviction and statewide foreclosure registration
- A tax credit equal to 25% of rehabilitation for owners and developers who provide a commitment to returning foreclosed buildings to productive use

The legislative package also includes several bills aimed at improving governmental efficiencies which will be reviewed in the February *Bureau Update*.