

# Ed Kennedy



STATE SENATE  
*First Middlesex District*

Winter 2024-2025 Newsletter

## Rourke Bridge Replacement Project Update



I am excited to share an update on the Rourke Bridge design-build project. According to the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), the Request for Proposal deadline was met, and the project is on schedule. The next steps include accepting public price proposals beginning January 23rd and a Notice to Proceed date to begin construction on March 28th. Visit the [Rourke Bridge Replacement Project website](#) for more information.

## Fire Equipment Safety Grants

1st Middlesex Senate District	
Fire Department	Grant Awarded
Dracut	\$17,554.82
Dunstable	\$12,407.89
Lowell	\$50,000.00
Pepperell	\$19,000.00
Tyngsborough	\$19,000.00



On Friday, January 17th, the Massachusetts Department of the Fire Services announced a series of Firefighter Safety Equipment Grant Awards for the firefighter safety equipment grant program. This program provides reimbursements to fire departments for the purpose of essential firefighter turnout gear, hoses, nozzles, communication equipment, and hand tools. Over 275 Massachusetts fire

departments will share more than \$4.5 million in funding with awards ranging from \$4,500 to \$50,000. The funding for the Firefighter Safety Equipment Grants was made available through a bond bill that was approved by the state legislature in 2020.

The allotments for the five communities that make up the First Middlesex Senate District are as follows: \$17,554.82 to the Town of Dracut, \$12,407.89 to the Town of Dunstable, \$50,000 to the City of Lowell, \$19,000 to the Town of Pepperell, and \$19,000 to the Town of Tyngsborough.

## Lowell Youth 12U Baseball Team

Congratulations to the Lowell Youth 12U Baseball Team on winning the 2024 Massachusetts State Championship last summer. On Tuesday, January 14th, 2025, the team, along with their coaches Brian Durkin, Brian White, Dave McNeil, and Stephen McNamara, were honored at a Lowell City Hall



ceremony where they received citations from the Massachusetts State Senate, the Massachusetts House of Representatives, and the City of Lowell. Winning the Massachusetts State Championship was historic because it was the first time the Lowell 12U Baseball team had been state champions.

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## Economic Development Bond Bill

On Wednesday, November 20th, Governor Healey signed into law the **Mass Leads Act**, an economic development bond bill authorizing funding for organizations and municipalities throughout the Commonwealth with a focus on creating jobs and supporting local economies. Senator Kennedy secured over \$10.5 million in funding that will benefit the First Middlesex Senate District when appropriated. The items filed by Senator Kennedy will go toward improving local infrastructure and community service organizations, and will also support A full list of authorizations filed by Senator Kennedy and included in the economic development bond bill can be [found on his website](#).

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## Lowell General Tour & Legislative Breakfast



On Monday, November 18th, my office had the opportunity to tour the Labor & Delivery Unit and Intensive Care Unit at Lowell General Hospital alongside other legislators and staff. The tour allowed government officials to observe the impact of essential state funding at the hospital, and the subsequent breakfast provided

an opportunity to discuss important issues related to healthcare and emergency services in the area.

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# State House Tree Lighting

On Wednesday, December 4th, the Massachusetts State House glowed with holiday cheer as Governor Maura Healey lit up the State House's Christmas tree with help from the Massachusetts Department of Children & Families' foster children and



Santa Claus. The tree lighting ceremony featured a performance from the Hamilton-Garrett Youth Choir. It was followed by festivities in the Great Hall featuring holiday treats sponsored by the Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources.

## Pharmaceutical Legislation

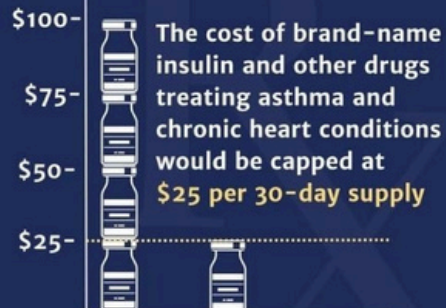
*MassSenate*

Today the Legislature passed bills to **lower the cost of prescription drugs** and protect patients by increasing **oversight of the health care industry**

Here's what this could mean for our Commonwealth



*MassSenate*



Insurers would also be required to offer one generic version of these drugs at **no cost**

*MassSenate*

Patients can expect to pay the **lowest price possible at the pharmacy** for their medication ensuring co-pays and deductibles don't exceed the drug's retail price



*MassSenate*

**Increased oversight of pharmacy benefit managers (PBMs) and pharmaceutical manufacturers** including a licensing process for PBMs

Pharmacy benefit managers act as brokers in the drug transaction process and play a major role in determining drug costs



On January 8th, Governor Healey signed into law two pieces of important legislation related to pharmaceuticals. The first is An Act Relative to Pharmaceutical Access, Costs, and Transparency, and the second is An Act Enhancing the Market Review Process. These laws reaffirm the Commonwealth's commitment to healthcare and my personal belief that healthcare is a human right, and cost should not be a barrier to essential medications.

These laws are achievements in lowering the cost of pharmaceutical drugs and creating systems of oversight in the pharmaceutical industry. An Act Relative to Pharmaceutical Access, Costs, and Transparency caps the price of brand-name essential medications at \$25 for a 30-day supply and requires insurers to offer generic versions of the same medications at no cost. An Act Enhancing the Market Review Process increases oversight of the pharmaceutical industry, including creating a licensing process for Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs), who play a large role in determining drug costs.

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## Home Base & University of Massachusetts Lowell Partnership



On Wednesday, November 20th, University of Massachusetts Lowell Chancellor Julie Chen and Home Base Executive Director Retired Brigadier General Jack Hammond signed a memorandum that formalized a partnership between Home Base and UMass Lowell. Home Base is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to healing the invisible wounds of war for veterans, service members, military families, and

families of the fallen. The organization will partner with the Lowell Innovation Network Corridor (LINC) at UMass Lowell to offer critical resources to veterans and military families across northern and western Massachusetts, southern New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine.

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