

Ed Kennedy



STATE SENATE
First Middlesex District

Spring 2025 Newsletter

UPCOMING EVENTS

- April is the start of the **WHITEWATER RAFTING SEASON IN LOWELL!** Trips run every weekend from April 19 to May 17, starting at 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Saturdays and Sundays. The 2025 season includes ***Rafting The Neighborhood*** on Sunday, April 27, a one-of-a-kind, full-day event for Lowell residents. [Learn more below.](#)
- The **MASS CULTURAL COUNCIL HAS TWO UPCOMING GRANT OPPORTUNITIES** for organizations to fund cultural programming and events: the [Operating Grants for Organizations](#), with applications due on April 17, and the [Creative Experience Grants](#), with applications due on April 30. [Learn more below.](#)
- The second round of **FUNDING FOR THE MA250 GRANT PROGRAM** is [now open](#) for marketing and programming initiatives commemorating the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution in Massachusetts. The deadline to apply is April 11 at 3:00 p.m. [Learn more below.](#)
- The **TOWN OF LEXINGTON WILL BE REENACTING THE BATTLE OF LEXINGTON** on April 19 from 5:15 a.m. to 7 a.m. **THE TOWN OF CONCORD WILL BE COMMEMORATING THE BATTLE OF CONCORD** with a dawn salute and parade. Visit <https://www.lexingtonma.gov/851/Patriots-Day-2025>

and <https://visitconcord.org/event/patriots-day-activities-for-concord-250/> for full Patriots' Day itineraries in both towns.

Legislators from Massachusetts and New Hampshire Discuss Merrimack River CSOs



On Friday, March 14, State Senator Bruce Tarr and I convened the third bipartisan meeting to address Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) in the Merrimack River. This was a continuation of the two meetings held previously in April and September. Attendees included federal and state house delegations from both Massachusetts and New Hampshire, and members of key organizations including the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC), the Merrimack River Watershed Council (MRWC), the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG), the Alliance of Climate and Environmental Stewards (ACES), and the Climate Cafe.

This meeting addressed various topics, including the potential incorporation of funding for CSOs into the Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and federal budgets. We also discussed the possible impact of recent federal legislative changes.

Office Hours



I would like to thank everyone who found the time to meet with me during my February office hours in the towns of Dracut, Dunstable, Tyngsborough, and Pepperell. For those in Lowell, I am pleased to share that my next office hours will be held on **Tuesday, April 8, from 4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at the Coalition for a Better Acre (CBA) Walk-In Center (450 Merrimack Street, Lowell, MA).**

Open office hours serve as an opportunity for me to directly engage with constituents on any matters, concerns, or ideas they may have regarding the First Middlesex Senate District and the Commonwealth as a whole. Whether you shared a personal story, proposed an idea, or raised a concern, your feedback was critical to shaping the work done on Beacon Hill.

As your State Senator, I'm fully committed to including your voices when addressing our district's challenges. If you weren't able to attend this month, I encourage you to join me at future office hours or reach out to my office.

Pepperell 250 Kickoff Event

On Sunday, January 26, the Town of Pepperell set off its 250th anniversary celebration with a cannon blast and birthday cake lighting. This was the first of many special events between now and August to celebrate the Town of Pepperell's 250th birthday and history.

The land currently known as Pepperell was settled in the early 18th century (1720s-1730s) as a collection of farms and river crossings settled by people from Groton. By the time Pepperell was formally incorporated in 1775, its people were fully



engrossed in the American independence movement. Several men native to Pepperell fought at the Old North Bridge during the Battle of Concord, and perhaps the town's most notable resident, William Prescott, served as the commander of the United Colonies during the Battle of Bunker Hill.

To honor [Pepperell's rich history](#) and tight-knit community, make sure to keep an eye out for the various events planned to celebrate the town's Quarter Millennial celebration, all leading up to the parade on **August 23, 2025**.

Filming The Lowellian with Senator Ed Kennedy and Senator Bruce Tarr



State Senator Bruce Tarr and I recently appeared as guests on the popular local television show The Lowellian. The LTC show was hosted by Carolyn McCarthy and produced by Wednesday Klevisha. The topic discussed on The Lowellian was the ongoing challenge of removing

combined sewer overflows during periods of heavy rain from the Merrimack River.

Senator Tarr and I co-chair a bipartisan working group consisting of state and federal elected officials and stakeholders from Massachusetts and New Hampshire charged with lifting the combined sewer overflow problem to the top of the federal agenda. The solution will require substantial resources and take years to complete.

Before the Clean Water Act of 1972, both stormwater and sewage were discharged directly into the Merrimack River. As a result of the Clean Water Act, five sewage treatment facilities were constructed along the Merrimack River in Manchester, Nashua, Lowell, Lawrence, and Haverhill. A sixth sewage treatment facility was constructed in Fitchburg along the Nashua River, which flows into the Merrimack River. Today, the Merrimack River is much cleaner,

except during periods of heavy rain. During heavy rainstorms, the rainwater overwhelms the sewage treatment facilities, and sewage drains into the Merrimack River. The solution is to create a dual system in each of the cities along the river that will separate stormwater from sewage.

Greenmont Senior Housing Groundbreaking

On Tuesday, February 4, state officials, community leaders, and elected officials broke ground on the Greenmont Senior Housing Project.



When

completed, the Greenmont Senior Housing Project will contain 56 one-bedroom rental units for seniors and disabled adults who earn 60% of the area's median income or less. Amenities will include an outdoor seating area, shared laundry facilities on each floor, a fenced-in pet area, an exercise room, a community room, and extra storage space for residents.

Developed by Common Ground Development Corporation, a subsidiary of Community Teamwork Incorporated, the Greenmont Senior Housing Project is an important step in bridging the gap between demand and availability of affordable senior housing units in Dracut.

Black Excellence on the Hill Award



On Friday, February 28, the Massachusetts Black and Latino Caucus hosted the annual Black Excellence on the Hill awards ceremony. The event celebrates the various Black community leaders and trailblazers who are impacting their cities and towns across the Commonwealth.

This year, I was honored to nominate my friend Ben Opara, a proud Lowell resident of 29 years, where he's raised his three children with his wife, Valerie. Mr. Opara has dedicated much of his time to his community, including volunteering as a member of the Immigration Commission of the City of Lowell. A highlight of his community leadership was co-founding the annual Lowell African Cultural Festival in 2000, which he still presides over today. Mr. Opara also serves on the Lowell School Building Committee and as President of the Lowell African Cultural Association.

Ben Opara earned his master's degree in civil engineering from UMass Lowell and, in 1992, founded Duziem Laboratories, a leading manufacturer of skin and personal care products and other specialty chemicals.

Black History Month Flag Raisings

To kick off Black History Month, flag-raising ceremonies were held at the State House in Boston and at City Hall in Lowell.



On Saturday, February 1, residents, community leaders, and elected officials met in front of Lowell City Hall for the annual flag raising ceremony, which was organized by the Afro-American Community Collaborative. This event honored the resilience of Lowell's African American community and the city's ongoing

commitment to unity, progress, and equality. To cap off the event, local barber Pete McKenzie was awarded the Mary Scott Mitchell Community Service Award in recognition of his impact on the city and its residents.

Additionally, on Monday, February 3, Governor Maura Healey commemorated Black History Month by raising a flag at the Massachusetts State House in Boston during a ceremony organized by the Joint Committee on Racial Equity, Civil Rights, and Inclusion and the Massachusetts Black and Latino Legislative Caucus.

United Teachers of Lowell Office Visit

On Tuesday, February 18, a delegation of Lowell Public School teachers representing the United Teachers of Lowell visited my office as they lobbied state legislators on Teachers for Retirement Plus Lobby Day at the State House in Boston.



New Beacon Hill Buzz Episode with Jon Santiago



The latest episode of [Beacon Hill Buzz](#) with Secretary of Veterans' Services Jon Santiago is now available on YouTube. Secretary Santiago and I discussed the new Massachusetts Veterans Benefit Calculator tool, the

HERO Act, and how veterans can access VA services.

Early College Day

On Wednesday, March 12, students from Lowell High School and Greater Lowell Technical High School participated in Early College Day at the State House in Boston. The early college program allows high school students to take college-level classes and earn transferable college credit. The program offers a variety of courses and allows students to jump-start their post-secondary education. As part of their visit, the students from both schools visited my State House office.



Lowell Whitewater Rafting



April is the start of whitewater rafting season in Lowell! Each spring, the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust partners with Zoar Outdoor to offer a one-of-a-kind white-water rafting experience in an urban setting. At this time of year, the Concord River swells with spring runoff and melting snow, creating one of the few urban white-water rafting destinations in the country. The trip includes several Class III and IV rapids. Trips run every weekend from April 19 to May 17, starting at 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. every Saturday and Sunday.

The 2025 season includes ***Rafting The Neighborhood*** on Sunday, April 27, a one-of-a-kind, full-day event for Lowell residents. Discount rates are available for Lowell residents through an application process.

Boys and Girls Club Youth of the Year Awards

Congratulations to Lowell High School students Napoleon Daniels and Jayden Stella and Greater Lowell Technical High School students Kevin Tuon and Hadassa Pelissier, who were finalists for the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Lowell's Youth of the Year Award!

Last Thursday, March 20, these extraordinary students were honored at a ceremony where they received citations from the Massachusetts State Senate and the Massachusetts House of Representatives. The Youth of the Year



Awards recognize leadership, service, dedication to living a healthy lifestyle, and academic excellence. Special congratulations to Jayden Stella who will be advancing to the state-level competition.

Mass Cultural Council Grant Opportunities

The Mass Cultural Council has two upcoming opportunities for organizations to fund cultural programming and events.

[Operating Grants for Organizations](#) are unrestricted general operating grants for Massachusetts-based nonprofit cultural organizations with year-round operations that offer public programming in the arts, humanities, or sciences. Grants start at \$6,000, and the deadline to apply is April 17, 2025.

The new [Creative Experiences Grants](#) provide funding for organizations (including schools) to support festivals, projects, residencies, and other cultural activities in the arts, humanities, and sciences. This program combines the former Festivals & Projects and Creative Projects for Schools into one. The deadline to apply is April 30, 2025.



MA250 Grant Program



The second round of funding for the [MA250 grant program](#) is now open for marketing and programming initiatives commemorating the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution in Massachusetts. The Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism

(MOTT) will award grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$100,000 to support programs that strive to bring this historic milestone to life through engaging events, exhibitions, and outreach efforts. The deadline to apply is Friday, April 11, at 3:00 p.m.

The Battles of Lexington and Concord Reenactment

Patriots' Day 2025 is the 250th anniversary of the Battles of Lexington and Concord. Visit the historic Lexington Battle Green at sunrise **(5 a.m.) on April 19** to watch the first battle of the Revolutionary War reenacted.

The night before April 19, 1775, Paul Revere and Sam Prescott spread word throughout Massachusetts of a British military expedition. Early that morning, the first shots were fired between American and British forces at Lexington, resulting in eight American casualties before the British troops continued to Concord. At the North Bridge in Concord, approximately 400 militiamen from Massachusetts engaged approximately 100 British soldiers, resulting in casualties on both sides.

Visit <https://lex250.org/> and <https://visitconcord.org/concord-250/> to learn more about events commemorating the Battles of Lexington and Concord on April 19, including the Battle reenactment as well as a sunrise salute and celebratory parades.

Learn more about Senator Kennedy at <https://senatoredkennedy.com/> or on [Facebook](#).

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