ML STRATEGIES

Massachusetts Senate Committee Leadership Established, Signaling Priorities

January 22, 2015 | Alert | By George Atanasov, **Julie Cox**, Amarynth Sichel

VIEWPOINT TOPICS

- State & Local Government Relations

SERVICE AREAS

- State & Local Government Relations

Yesterday afternoon, Senate President Stanley Rosenberg revealed his senior leadership team and announced which legislators he selected to lead the Senate's special and standing committees.

The committee assignments give clues as to President Rosenberg's stance on a number of issues, while his decision to create five special committees and add three new standing committees hints at what the Senate's agenda may include for the beginning of the two-year legislative cycle.

Senator Karen Spilka, a sixth-term democrat from Ashland, will take one of the most coveted and influential committee chair positions, leading the powerful budget-writing Senate Ways and Means Committee. She replaces Stephen Brewer, who did not seek re-election, and will be joined by Senator Sal DiDomenico, who will take over as vice-chairman of Ways and Means.

Senator Benjamin Downing of Pittsfield will continue to chair the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities & Energy, which has jurisdiction over the exploration, exploitation and development of renewable and conventional energy sources, the siting of energy facilities, public utilities, wind farms, the bottle bill and more.

Rosenberg tapped Senator Jamie Eldridge, a steadfastly liberal Democrat, to take over as chair of the Financial Services committee, which helps to regulate the banking industry.

Senator Sonia Chang-Diaz, who was fervently skeptical of charter schools during last year's contentious debate over charter school expansion, remains chair of the Education committee, with another senator seen as opposed to charter schools, Senator Patricia Jehlen, as her vice chair. While that appears to signal that the Senate is taking a stand against charter schools, Rosenberg maintains that Senator Chang-Diaz is not hostile to charter schools, but is looking for a "third way."

In another telling move, Senator Rosenberg tasked Senator Eileen Donoghue of Lowell, who initiated action in the Legislature on Boston's 2024 summer Olympic bid, with chairing the Economic Development and Emerging Technologies Committee in the new session.

Senate Leadership Appointments

- ***Majority Leader*** – Harriette Chandler (D – Worcester)
  Sen. Chandler, who was elected from the Massachusetts House to the Senate in 2001, previously served as the Senate Assistant Majority Leader.
- ***President Pro Tempore*** – Marc Pacheco (D – Taunton)
  Sen. Pacheco, who is the second longest serving member of the Senate, after Rosenberg, will take over for Sen. Richard Moore, who lost his bid for re-election to Republican Ryan Fattman.
- ***Assistant Majority Leaders***
  Sen. Rosenberg expanded the number of assistant majority leaders from one to three, selecting the following to serve both as Assistant Majority Leaders, and as chairs of other Senate standing committees:
  - Cynthia Creem (D – Newton)
  - Brian Joyce (D – Milton)
  - Mark Montigny (D – New Bedford)
- ***Majority Whip*** – Anthony Petruccelli (D – East Boston)
  Sen. Petruccelli, who previously chaired the Financial Services Committee, will now join the ranks of Senate leadership.
- ***Assistant Majority Whip*** – Kenneth Donnelly (D – Arlington)
  Sen. Donnelly previously chaired the Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight.

Special Senate Committee Appointments

The special committees the Senate created shed further light on the Senate's goals. Special committees include:

- ***Special Senate Committee on Housing***, which will make recommendations to move the Commonwealth towards a sustainable housing policy that will increase access to housing for low and moderate income individuals and families, reduce homelessness and make recommendations to appropriately allocate state resources.
  - Chair Linda Dorcena Forry (D – Dorchester)
  - Vice Chair Harriette Chandler (D – Worcester)
- ***Special Senate Committee on Innovative Education***, which will review the current status of alternative models for delivery of education services to discuss the future of those models including sustainability and funding, and to suggest new pathways for innovative education in the Commonwealth.
  - Chair Patricia Jehlen (D – Somerville)
  - Vice Chair Barbara L'Italien (D – Dracut)

  It is worth noting that Senator Patricia Jehlen, who is also vice chair of the Education committee, was skeptical of charter schools during last year's contentious charter school debate in the Senate.
- ***Special Senate Committee on Opioid Addiction***, which will assess the implementation of recently passed legislation to combat opioid abuse and make further recommendations to strengthen our Commonwealth's ability to respond to the opioid crisis with a focus on prevention, intervention, treatment and recovery.
  - Chair Jennifer Flanagan (D – Leominster)
- ***Special Senate Committee on Marijuana***, which will assess the implementation of medical marijuana and examine the issue of marijuana legalization in other states and make recommendations for the Senate regarding any legalization or ballot initiative on the subject.

  The creation of this commission is timely, as advocates are considering attempting to put a question to legalize marijuana on the 2016 ballot.
  - Chair Jason Lewis (D – Winchester)
- ***Special Senate Committee on Government Expenditures, Performance and Accountability***, which will examine and evaluate government spending across all public agencies, quasi-public agencies and municipalities throughout the Commonwealth to assess existing finances, systems and procedures and seek to identify measures that will result in savings and efficiencies, improved performance and enhanced outcomes.
  - Chair Brian Joyce (D – Milton)
  - Vice Chair Bruce Tarr (R – Gloucester)

Senate Standing Committees Appointments

Click committee name to see additional members.

Ways and Means – Chair Karen Spilka (D – Ashland)

- Jehlen – AVC
- DiDomenico
- Brownsberger
- Chang-Diaz
- Donnelly
- Donoghue
- Downing
- Keenan
- Kennedy
- McGee
- Moore
- Petruccelli
- Rush
- Timilty

Rules – Chair Mark Montigny (D – New Bedford)

- Creem – Vice
- Chandler
- Spilka

Ethics– Chair Cynthia Creem (D – Newton)

- Brownsberger – Vice
- Chandler

- DiDomenico

Bills in Third Reading – Chair Brian Joyce (D – Milton)

- Petruccelli – Vice
- Donoghue
- Downing

Post Audit & Oversight – Chair Michael Barrett (D – Lexington)

- Downing – Vice
- Lewis
- Moore
- Welch

Steering & Policy – Chair Daniel Wolf (D – Harwich)

- Lewis – Vice
- Chang-Diaz
- O'Connor Ives

Bonding, Capital Expenditures & State Assets – Chair John Keenan (D – Quincy)

- Chang-Diaz – Vice
- Donnelly
- Donoghue
- Moore

Global Warming – Chair Marc Pacheco (D – Taunton)

- Eldridge – Vice
- Barrett
- Downing
- McGee

Children's Caucus – Chair Thomas McGee (D – Lynn)

*Intergovernmental Affairs** – Chair Linda Dorcena Forry (D – Dorchester)

- L'Italien – Vice
- Gobi
- Moore
- Rodrigues

*Redistricting** – Chair Benjamin Downing (D – Pittsfield)

- Joyce – Vice
- Chang-Diaz
- L'Italien
- Timilty

*Personnel & Administration** – Chair Michael Rush (D – West Roxbury)

- O'Connor Ives - Vice
- Donnelly
- Donoghue
- Pacheco

**Newly created Senate standing committee*

Senate Joint Standing Committee Appointments

Financial Services – Chair Jamie Eldridge (D – Acton)

- Lesser – Vice
- Keenan
- O'Connor Ives
- Rodrigues

Higher Education – Chair Michael Moore (D – Millbury)

- Donoghue – Vice
- Downing
- L'Italien
- O'Connor Ives

Children & Families – Chair Jennifer Flanagan (D – Leominster)

- Lovely – Vice
- Chang-Diaz
- Keenan
- Lewis

Economic Development & Emerging Technologies – Chair Eileen Donoghue (D – Lowell)

- Gobi – Vice
- Barrett
- Keenan
- Lesser
- McGee

Mental Health & Substance Abuse – Chair Jennifer Flanagan (D – Leominster)

- Lovely – Vice
- Donnelly
- Dorcena Forry
- Eldridge

Public Health – Chair Jason Lewis (D – Winchester)

- Flanagan – Vice
- Lesser
- Lovely
- Timilty

Education – Chair Sonia Chang-Diaz (D – Boston)

- Jehlen – Vice
- Dorcena Forry
- Lewis
- L'Italien

Telecommunications, Utilities & Energy – Chair Benjamin Downing (D – Pittsfield)

- Pacheco – Vice
- Gobi
- Joyce
- Wolf

Judiciary – Chair William Brownsberger (D – Belmont)

- Keenan – Vice
- Chang-Diaz
- Creem
- Jehlen

Housing – Chair Linda Dorcena Forry (D – Dorchester)

- Keenan – Vice
- Chandler
- Gobi
- Jehlen

State Administration & Regulatory Oversight – Chair Joan Lovely (D – Salem)

- Eldridge – Vice
- Barrett
- Keenan
- Rodrigues

Environment, Natural Resources & Agriculture – Chair Anne Gobi (D – Spencer)

- Rush – Vice
- Eldridge
- McGee
- Timilty

Public Safety & Homeland Security – Chair James Timilty (D – Walpole)

- Moore – Vice
- Chang-Diaz
- Flanagan
- Welch

Tourism, Arts & Cultural Development – Chair Eric Lesser (D – Longmeadow)

- Downing – Vice
- Eldridge
- Lovely
- Wolf

Public Service – Chair James Timilty (D – Walpole)

- Rodrigues – Vice
- Barrett
- Donnelly
- Kennedy

Revenue – Chair Michael Rodrigues (D – Westport)

- Timilty – Vice
- Downing
- Lesser

- Wolf

Community Development & Small Businesses – Chair Kathleen O'Connor Ives (D – Newburyport)

- Rush – Vice
- L'Italien
- Rodrigues
- Wolf

Elder Affairs – Chair Patricia Jehlen (D – Somerville)

- L'Italien – Vice
- Barrett
- Gobi
- Lesser

Consumer Protection & Professional Licensure – Chair Thomas Kennedy (D – Brockton)

- Petruccelli – Vice
- O'Connor Ives
- Rodrigues
- Timilty

Municipalities & Regional Government – Chair Barbara L'Italien (D – Dracut)

- Lovely – Vice
- Brownsberger
- Donoghue
- Timilty

Election Laws – Chair Thomas Kennedy (D – Brockton)

- Donnelly – Vice
- Brownsberger
- DiDomenico
- Welch

Transportation – Chair Thomas McGee (D – Lynn)

- Keenan – Vice
- Donoghue
- Dorcena Forry
- Lesser
- Rush

Health Care Financing – Chair James Welch (D – West Springfield)

- Montigny – Vice
- Barrett
- Dorcena Forry
- Joyce
- L'Italien

Labor & Workforce Development – Chair Daniel Wolf (D – Harwich)

- Barrett – Vice
- Donoghue
- Lewis
- Moore

Veterans & Federal Affairs – Chair Michael Rush (D – West Roxbury)

- Kennedy – Vice
- Barrett
- Gobi
- Lesser

The Commonwealth's leadership has seen more change in the past few weeks than it has at any one time in the past eight years, as both the new Governor and the new Senate President fill out their leadership ranks. ML Strategies recently provided an analysis of Governor Baker's new administration, and will continue to provide updates as Beacon Hill adjusts to its fresh political situation.

Authors

George Atanasov

Julie Cox

Amarynth Sichel