

## Two Important Updates

In addition to passing a balanced budget with bipartisan support, the House of Representatives also passed two other important pieces of legislation: Court Reorganization and Probation Reform, and Funding for Municipal Road and Bridge Maintenance.

Earlier this month, the House passed, with a unanimous vote of 152-0, landmark legislation that will improve efficiency in the state's court system and bring transparency to hiring and promotion at the Department of Probation.

At the center of the legislation is a provision providing for an objective entrance exam for the hiring and promotion of all probation and court officers. Successfully passing the exam will enable candidates to advance to the interview stage, provided they meet all other requirements for the position.

The bill also adds needed transparency to the hiring and promotion practices across state agencies by requiring recommendations offered on behalf of any applicant to be made in writing and shielded from hiring authorities until the final round of the interview process.

In addition, applicants for employment within the executive, legislative, and judicial branches will have to disclose the name of all immediate family members who are state employees. This information will be made public for successful applicants.

In April, the House passed legislation to apportion funding for the maintenance of municipal roads and bridges for the upcoming fiscal year. Overall, the bill authorizes \$200 million for the maintenance and upkeep of municipal road and bridges across the Commonwealth. The \$200 million in road and bridge maintenance funds represent **a 29% increase** over the funding dispersed for the same purpose last year. This resulted in \$672,797.00 for Gloucester, \$134,704.00 for Essex, and \$194,373.00 for Rockport.