



105 Chauncy St. #901
Boston, MA 02111

www.miracoalition.org
Voice: 617.350.5480
Fax: 617.350.5499

MIRA FY10 Governor's Revised House 1 Budget Analysis

On June 4, 2009, Governor Patrick issued a revised version of his House 1 budget as a result of the significant decline in revenue projections. While the Governor's revised budget does not have a direct impact on discussions in Conference Committee, it is seen as a statement of the Governor's priorities and an indication of which items in the budget he may veto. As has been the case throughout much of the FY10 budget season, the Governor's revised budget included severe cuts to all areas of government. Numerous programs and groups saw their funding slashed or eliminated, and the immigrant community was hit hard.

In one of the few bright spots of the budget season, the Governor **maintained current eligibility standards in Commonwealth Care** in his revised House 1 budget. A provision of the Senate budget had cut Commonwealth Care eligibility for 28,000 "special status" immigrants, which would have a devastating impact on the well-being of the families and communities impacted by the cuts. Thankfully, the Governor chose to uphold the promise and eligibility gains of health reform and not cut Commonwealth Care eligibility.

The Citizenship Services line item, however, was reduced to \$250,000, the amount appropriated in the Senate budget. This low level of funding threatens the ability of providers to maintain their programs and provide needed services to low-income immigrants who wish to become naturalized U.S. citizens but face numerous barriers in doing so.

As a member of the **Stop the Cuts Coalition**, MIRA recognizes the importance of increasing revenues to fund the vital programs and services upon which many jobs and lives depend. We need new and substantial revenue sources if we hope restore funding to the programs that help change lives and give hope to so many. We support the adoption of the Senate's revenue proposals in Conference, since the sales tax is not nearly enough to cover the budget deficit.

As the budget process continues in Conference Committee, MIRA and its allies are committed to seeking the best results for programs serving immigrant communities across the Commonwealth and, following the lead of the Governor and House, to restoring coverage for 28,000 legal immigrants whose well-being relies on a return to the promise and values of health reform and the goal of insuring all residents of Massachusetts.

The following is an analysis of how the Governor's revised House 1 budget impacted each of MIRA's budgetary priorities:

The Governor's revised budget maintained current eligibility standards for Commonwealth Care. While it is not clear whether the Governor would veto an outside section

that eliminates Commonwealth Care coverage for “special status” immigrants in the final version of the legislature’s budget, it is a sign that the Governor does not agree with the Senate’s decision to cut eligibility. The final Senate budget included Outside Section 77, which cut eligibility for “special status” immigrants in Commonwealth Care, with the requirement of 45 days notice prior to termination. The cut in eligibility, if finalized, would drive 28,000 legal immigrants, including new legal permanent residents (green card holders) without 5 years in a qualified status, into Emergency Medicaid and the Health Safety Net. The eligibility cut is contrary to the Commonwealth’s stated goal of insuring all residents, undermines the values and goals of Health Reform, and shifts costs to the already overburdened safety net health care system.

Next Steps: MIRA and its allies will be working to ensure the restoration of Commonwealth Care coverage to 28,000 legal immigrants in Conference Committee.

Following the lead of the Senate, the Governor’s revised budget **cut Citizenship for New Americans Program (CNAP) (Line item 4003-0122) funding to \$250,000**, which represents a 50% cut from the Final House budget and a decrease of 62% from initial FY09 funding levels. These low levels of funding threaten the ability of providers to maintain their programs and provide needed services to low-income immigrants who wish to become naturalized U.S. citizens, but face numerous economic, legal and other barriers to doing so.

Next Steps: MIRA and its allies will be working to ensure that the Conference Committee includes the \$500,000 House budget appropriation for citizenship in its final version of the budget.

The Governor’s revised budget included **\$28,223,195 for Adult Basic Education (ABE) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) (Line item 7035-0002)**, which is nearly \$200,000 more than both the final House and Senate budgets. This figure represents a reduction of nearly \$3 million from FY09 levels of \$31.1 million, a reduction of \$1.7 million after this year’s 9-C cuts brought the value down to \$29.9 million, and a cut of \$1 million from the Governor’s initial recommendation of \$29,223,195. Because there is a difference of \$500 between the amounts ABE/ESOL received in the House and Senate budgets, the line item should receive approximately **\$28,085,000** coming out of Conference Committee.

Next Steps: MIRA and its allies will be working to ensure that the Conference Committee includes the more than \$28 million appropriated in both the House and Senate budgets in its final version of the budget.

The **Workforce Training Fund (WTF) was funded at \$18 million (line item 7003-0701)** in the Governor’s revised budget, a decrease of \$3 million from his initial House 1 budget. The final House budget proposed \$21 million and the final Senate budget included only \$10 million. MIRA was asking for full funding at \$21 million to help facilitate the implementation of a Dedicated Fund for ABE/ESOL that combines funding from the Department of Elementary and

Secondary Education's workplace education grants with funds from the WTF to create a single, streamlined fund that expands resources for workplace education. The WTF is funded exclusively through employer contributions in the form of a surcharge on Unemployment Insurance and, as such, should not impact the General Fund.

Next Steps: MIRA and its allies will be working to ensure that the Conference Committee includes the \$21 million House appropriation for the WTF in its final version of the budget.

The line item containing the **Refugee and Immigrant Safety and Empowerment (RISE) Program (4513-1130), mirroring the Governor's first budget, was consolidated into other line items.** As a result, it is not clear how funding for RISE would be impacted by the consolidation. In the final Senate budget, the line item containing RISE took a cut of over 20% down to \$5,058,264 from nearly \$6.4 million and language referring to "immigrants and refugees" was included in the line item. The final House budget included \$50,000 more and language referring to domestic violence and sexual assault services for immigrants and refugees was also included. The severe cut in funding threatens the stability of programs and the provision of essential services for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Next Steps: MIRA and other advocates and allies are asking for the House appropriation level with Senate language in the final version of the budget coming out of Conference.

The **MassHealth Outreach Grant Program was not funded in the Governor's revised budget.** The program was not funded in the Governor's initial proposal and the House budget, but received funding through Outside Section 73 in the final Senate budget, which asks two agencies (HEFA and the Connector) to continue their contributions to outreach at \$2.5 million. MIRA and its allies were asking for level-funding at \$3.5 million. The inclusion of funding for the MassHealth Outreach Grant Program in the final Senate budget was considered a victory, since indications from numerous legislators were that it was unlikely to be included in the budget. The grants are matched at 60.2% by the federal government, so the cost to the Commonwealth would only be \$980,000.

Next Steps: MIRA and its allies will be working to ensure that the Conference Committee includes the Senate's Outside Section 73 language on outreach in its final version of the budget.

Please contact your Representative and Senator to urge them to support immigrant communities throughout the Commonwealth in Conference Committee.

Below is the contact information for elected officials, likely members of the Conference Committee, and leadership:

General Number: 617-722-2000
Chairman C. Murphy: 617-722-2990
Representative L'Italien: 617-722-2380
Representative deMacedo: 617-722-2100

Chairman Panagiotakos: 617-722-1630
Senator Brewer: 617-722-1540
Senator Knapik: 617-722-1415
Speaker of the House DeLeo: 617-722-2500
Senate President Murray: 617-722-1500

If you do not know who your State Representative and/or Senator are, please visit:
<http://www.wheredoivotema.com>.

For more information or questions, please contact Toby Guevin at 617-350-5480 x216 or
tguevin@miracoalition.org.