



**MASSACHUSETTS
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COUNCIL**

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**Policy, Politics Heat Up Spring on Beacon Hill
Council Active in Education, Economy and Health Care**

**Council's Had
Active Early
Spring . . .**

The Massachusetts High Tech Council has been at the center of many significant policy and political developments in recent weeks, much of which has been reflected in direct communications with members since our last newsletter. The remarkable progress made in early 2003 toward the Council's public policy priorities is helping set the stage for the crucial period of the legislative session when the outcome of the Fiscal Year 04 budget will be determined.

**Wyeth Hosts
Regional
Legislative
Meeting . . .**

On March 21, the Council held the first of a series of regional meetings with local legislators at **Wyeth BioPharma in Andover**. This meeting, attended by 25 Council members, helped northeast area legislators learn the priorities of the Council in the areas of economic policy, education, transportation and health care. The Council would like to thank **Senator Susan Tucker** (D-Andover), **Senator Bruce Tarr** (R-Gloucester) and **Representative Brian Dempsey** (D-Haverhill), who was recently named the **Chair of the House Committee on Science and Technology** for a constructive dialogue on the challenges facing the state and technology community.

**Next Meeting
at Analog
May 30 . . .**

To build on this rapport with legislators in high tech rich regions of the state, the Council plans to hold additional regional meetings with legislators and members. The next meeting will be hosted by **Ray Stata** on Friday, May 30 at **Analog Devices** in Norwood and will feature **House Ways and Means Chair John Rogers** (D-Norwood) who is the House's lead budget negotiator. Rogers will have a big say in the budget debate as to whether the state uses tax increases – including many that directly affect technology employers and employees – or spending constraint and reforms to state programs to close the estimated \$3 billion budget deficit.

**Open Letter
to Romney,
Bulger . . .**

On March 25, a letter from several Council Directors was sent to **Governor Mitt Romney** and **University of Massachusetts President William Bulger**, asking for the two leaders to come together to build a first-class higher education system that maximizes UMASS's economic contribution to the Commonwealth's technology economy.

**Romney
Reform on
Right Track,
but UMASS
System Needs
Preserving . . .**

The CEOs wrote: "We support Governor Romney's dramatic reforms to remove the shackles of state government from public higher education. We specifically endorse legislative proposals for tuition retention, a more coherent and consistent student cost structure, removal of restrictions on outsourcing, carry-over of state funds, and management reforms relative to collective bargaining. And, we encourage additional legislative reforms in processes for constructing public buildings and leasing property. **However, we do not believe that replacing the UMASS President's Office with a new governance structure and dismantling the current five-campus system is good for the future of public higher education, science research, or our technology economy.** This proposal runs counter to the findings of the Saxon Commission, and we have not seen any empirical evidence that eliminating the current campus system will benefit UMASS students."

The letter has gotten a great deal of attention in the media and on Beacon Hill, and has helped open up dialogue between the Administration and the UMASS President's office to continue the progress toward putting the UMASS system on par with any in the nation. To read a copy of the letter visit mhtc.org.

SciTech Initiative Paying Off . . .

The letter also emphasized the strides made so far on the *Science & Technology Initiative* that Stata outlined in his speech at the Council's 25th Anniversary Gala in October and that the Council and Mass Insight have been working all fall and winter to develop. The Initiative called for a cabinet-level science and technology adviser, which led to Romney's designation of **Barbara Berke as Secretary of Business & Technology**. The Council also worked with Romney to secure the state's commitment to provide matching grant funds as part of a \$25 million University of Massachusetts research project that stands to benefit numerous tech employers.

Big Three Agree on Tech's Value . . .

In a spirit of bipartisan cooperation not seen on Beacon Hill in some time, on April 7 Governor Romney, **Speaker of the House Tom Finneran**, and **Senate President Robert Travaglini** joined **Council President Chris Anderson**, **MIT President Charles Vest**, and other technology leaders to celebrate the filing of a legislative resolve calling for the state to create a science and technology focused economic development plan. The resolve, a non-binding resolution, echoes many of the policy points outlined in the *Science & Technology Initiative* and was created by members of the Science and Technology Caucus.

Long-Term View Needed . . .

At the event, Speaker Finneran reinforced the Council's argument that the state needs to focus on the long-term health of the Commonwealth's technology economy. "The sign of leadership is that you don't spend so much time focusing on the immediate challenges that you lose focus on what lies ahead." And MIT's Vest praised the work of the Council. "Public policy can facilitate innovation and entrepreneurship, but they require a vibrant, forward-looking private sector...the Massachusetts High Tech Council, and Mass Insight have been using their convening power very effectively."

Needs Assessment Road Map Next Steps for SciTech . . .

All three leaders called for action items to buttress the symbolic gesture of the resolve. This ties in nicely with the next step of the *Science & Technology Initiative*: The **Needs Assessment and Road Map**, which is designed to put "meat on the bones" of a plan to transform the state's technological and academic resources into long-term prosperity and job growth. The Council looks forward to the participation of its members in the Road Map process as we work with a consulting team to craft a long-term plan to preserve and expand Massachusetts's lead in critical technology clusters.

The Council would like to recognize **Senator David Magnani** (D-

Framingham), **Representative Stephen LeDuc** (D-Marlborough) and **Representative Cory Atkins** (D-Acton) for their leadership on the resolve.

Council Tackles Health Care Issues . . .

The Council is also making significant progress toward its health care priorities set forth in the 2003 Public Policy Priorities approved by the Directors on February 26. **Council Vice President Cort Boulanger** participated in an employer health care lobby day on Beacon Hill that united 14 Massachusetts business organizations concerned over the rising costs of employee health care. Boulanger and other business executives attended a press conference at the State House, followed by meetings with key legislative leaders to directly relay employer concerns over health care costs. The event was successful, because by the end of the day the Romney Administration withdrew a proposal to tax health plans nearly \$90 million to fund the state's Medicaid program. The Council had previously penned a letter with other business groups opposing the new tax because the cost would ultimately be placed on employers and their employees.

Public Policies Hike Employer Health Care Costs . . .

There are still many significant health care challenges facing employers in Massachusetts. The Administration is still pushing for a \$100 million assessment of health plans and employers to the state's poorly managed Uncompensated Care Pool, although the House is uncertain whether to include that assessment in its forthcoming state budget legislation. The Council is also concerned about the state's medical malpractice insurance system, which is driving up the cost of health care and threatening the quality of medical delivery. In a state that relies on health care as a major contributor to our economy, we cannot afford to face shortages of specialists or other doctors that threaten to weaken our world-class health care institutions.

Free Access to 1000 Tech Worker Resumes . . .

Thinking about hiring in the near future? The Council is joining together with the **495 Networking Group** to provide Council members with access to a database of more than 1000 eastern Massachusetts-based technology workers to fill positions as the economy heats up. The 495 Networking Group is comprised of more than 1500 skilled workers from across the employment spectrum, and through a partnership with the Council has made available their easy-to-use and comprehensive job applicant web database. If you are a human resource professional and are interested in free access to the database, please contact Cort Boulanger (cort@mhtc.org).