

REPRESENTATIVE JEFFREY SÁNCHEZ

PARTNERING FOR PEOPLE

2017-2018 SESSION RECAP

Friends and Neighbors:

After two years of work, research, discussions, negotiations, and debates, the 2017-2018 legislative session came to a close on July 31. I am incredibly proud of the work we, in the House of Representatives, accomplished since the start of 2017.

Our agenda focused on partnering for people. Massachusetts is unique because there are so many agencies, programs, and policies that work together to help people no matter where they are in their lives. Whether it's finding an affordable place to call home, getting an education, learning a trade, or accessing healthcare, our commonwealth is here to help people.

Midway through the session I was appointed Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee. I am humbled by this role and proud to have passed a budget that lifts up working families to ensure our economy – and society as a whole – supports the most vulnerable and gives everyone the opportunity to thrive.

I'm committed to our district: I grew up here and engage with folks from Mission Hill, Jamaica Plain, Roslindale, and Brookline every day. Partnering Friends, family, and neighbors in our community guided me throughout this session, and I look forward to working together to serve you in the future.



Yours in Service,



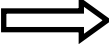
Jeffrey Sánchez
State Representative
15th Suffolk District



Partnering for people was at the core of the 2017-2018 legislative agenda. We passed progressive policies and budgets that turn high-level ideas into action.

Here's a highlight of our agenda and some of what we accomplished this session:

- Increasing access to affordable housing
- Improving infrastructure and transportation
- Ensuring quality, public education
- Increasing income equality
- Ensuring access to affordable healthcare
- Affirming Equality and women's rights
- Expanding renewable energy and environmental protection
- Improving gun safety
- Helping those struggling with substance use
- Implementing criminal justice reform
- Securing voting rights
- A \$41.88 billion budget investing in people

Continue reading for all the details 

Partnering for People



We are experiencing an affordable housing crisis here in Boston and across Massachusetts. That's why we passed a **\$1.8 billion housing bond bill to finance affordable housing**. It funds programs responsible for developing over 600 units of housing in Jackson Square and Parcel 25 in Mission Hill. It also provides funding so buildings at risk of losing affordability can remain affordable. In fact, programs included in the bill helped fund JPND's project to build 44 affordable units at 25 Amory St.

We built on this success in the House budget. As someone who grew up in public housing, I've seen how important housing vouchers, and homeless assistance programs are for helping people stay in their homes. Heralded by housing and homelessness advocates, our **budget increased funding for long-term housing solutions 11% to reduce homelessness while also creating a new program geared toward rapidly rehousing homeless individuals**. We provided \$5 million flexible dollars for shelters like Pine Street Inn to strategically help individuals cover rent, go to school, or look for a job.



We need a twenty-first century transportation system and the infrastructure to support it. This session, we advanced numerous economic

development and infrastructure finance packages to **invest \$7.8 billion over the next five years in our roads, public transportation, coastline, and public buildings**.

These bond authorizations will flow locally into our district. I secured **\$7 million for the Jackson Square Recreation Center**, a project the community has been advocating for this project for years. This funding builds on the money discovered by the Hyde Square Task Force, the \$3 million we secured in the 2008 bond bill, the \$2 million commitment from Mayor Walsh, and the millions raised by Urban Edge. I also secured **\$6M for reconstruction of the North American Indian Center of Boston** and **\$40M for infrastructure improvements along Centre St**. This will help Hyde Square Task Force develop the Blessed Sacrament building and improve the street, sidewalks, and affordable housing between Hyde and Jackson Squares.



I spent the past 15 years advocating for legislation to overturn the failed one-size-fits-all policy of teaching English Language Learner (ELL) students. I am incredibly proud that my legislation **providing school districts flexibility to teach ELL students was signed into law November 2017**. The Language Opportunities for Our Kids (LOOK) Act recognizes each student is unique, and will ensure they have the instruction necessary to learn English and excel in their academic career.

Our budget made significant strides to increase public education funding.

We fully funded year two of the seven year phase-in of the Foundation Budget Review Commission findings to relative to healthcare costs. Plus, **we increased funding by \$26M for special education, \$7M for reimbursements to districts with charter schools, and a 185% increase for ELL instruction**, which will help implement the LOOK Act in districts across the Commonwealth. And soon, we'll start preparing for the next budget cycle, where we can **continue to implement reforms for adequate and equitable public school funding**.



Boston is booming with record-low unemployment. But when you look past the cranes downtown, there are far too many people who still struggle to make rent or put food on the table. We passed significant policies to decrease that gap and provide opportunities for people to thrive.

The **\$15 minimum wage** is a rallying cry in states across the country. I proudly **voted to make it law** here in Massachusetts. Nearly one million hard-working nursing assistants, childcare providers, paramedics, and others will see an increase in wages because of this legislation.

Additionally, we approved the **only job-guaranteed paid family and medical leave policy in the country**. Nearly 1.2 million Massachusetts workers risk losing their jobs if they take time off under older laws. With the legislation I helped pass, workers will be able to take time off to care

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2017-2018 Legislative Accomplishments

for a loved one, bond with a new child, or recover from illness.

In my first budget as Chair of Ways and Means, we **increased the Earned Income Tax Credit** to 30% of the federal match. This is a proven policy to lift working people out of poverty. Our final budget **lifted the “cap on kids,”** a regressive policy that punished women and denied children benefits based on when they were born. Ultimately, the Governor vetoed the provision, so I am committed to lifting the cap next session.

I voted twice for the Fair Share Amendment, which would have put a surcharge on income in excess of \$1 million to fund education and transportation. I was disappointed that it was struck down by the courts, because it would have provided much-needed revenue for public education and our transportation system. Our discussion of equity, fairness, and revenue will continue next session.



In Massachusetts, we are committed to the principle of universal healthcare—nearly 98% of the population has an insurance card.

Still, inequalities persist throughout our system. For 15 years, I advocated for an Office of Health Equity. This session, **I successfully passed legislation to establish this office to address racial and ethnic health disparities in Massachusetts.**

Previously, I served as Chair of the Health Care Financing Committee, where I chaired the Special Commission on Provider Price Variation to study why some hospitals are paid more than other hospitals for provid-

ing similar services. The House passed legislation based on the Commission's findings. It created a fee on insurance companies, urgent care centers, and ambulatory clinics to pay community hospitals at risk of closing due to low reimbursement rates. I will continue to pursue policies that increase access to affordable healthcare.



Standing up against discrimination is in my DNA. This session we advanced progressive policies to empower women and LGBTQ individuals.

The threat of a changing Supreme Court majority puts women's rights immediately at risk. In the event that *Roe v. Wade* be overturned at some point, **we protected a women's right to choose** by eliminating outdated laws that would have prohibited reproductive freedom. I helped pass legislation **ensuring copay-free birth control for every woman** in the Commonwealth—also known as the ACCESS Act. In addition, we passed the **pregnant workers' fairness act**, which holds employers accountable for accommodating expecting mothers.

I joined my colleagues in the House to **ban the harmful practice of “conversion therapy” for minors.** However, time ran out near the end of session for it to be finalized. I am committed to passing the ban into law next session. In the budget, we required **elder services providers to undergo LGBTQ training** to prevent discrimination against older adults based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

In the wake of the #MeToo movement, I met with students from our district about the sexual violence epidemic on college campuses. The House passed legislation that would **require colleges and universities to conduct sexual misconduct climate surveys** to increase transparency and better support survivors. I will continue to work on sexual violence awareness.



This session, we passed significant energy and environment legislation in the face of our changing climate. We **increased the amount of renewable energy in Massachusetts, eliminated counter-productive fees that have stalled solar power, and required every city and town to create a climate vulnerability plan.**

In the budget, I **prioritized funding for environmental programs**, including watershed management, environmental protection, DCR state parks and recreation, a significant increase for climate change planning and adaption, and funding specifically for environmental justice staff. We also passed a **\$2.4 billion environmental bond bill** to fund climate resiliency projects, electric vehicle incentives, and energy storage initiatives.

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With Rep. Marjorie Decker, my partner in passing progressive legislation.



As inaction continues at the federal level, I am proud that Massachusetts has the strongest gun safety laws in the country. This session, we strengthened these laws to ensure that every person, school, and neighborhood is safe from the scourge of gun violence.

After the tragedy in Las Vegas, we moved swiftly to **ban the use of rapid fire “bump stocks.”** We also passed the **“red flag” law** that allows family members and/or roommates to ask a court to take someone’s gun away if they think the person is a threat to themselves or someone else. There were many warning signs before the heartbreak at Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. Our new law empowers people to speak up before lives are senselessly lost.



The opioid epidemic is a public health crisis that affects every community in Massachusetts. I supported legislation in 2014 and 2016 – including the nation’s first policy to limit first-time adult opioid prescriptions to a 7-day supply.

Building on that work, we passed legislation to further **help those struggling with substance use disorder.** Our law allows anyone to purchase the overdose-reversing drug Narcan. It also requires emergency rooms to provide access to evidence-based care for people struggling with opioid use disorder. And, it establishes medication-assisted treatment for people with substance use disorder at 3 state prisons, and 5 county correctional facilities. I am steadfastly committed to meeting the needs of individuals, families and our communities affected by substance use disorder.



Growing up in Boston, many of my friends fell victim to the criminal justice system. **This session, we reformed it front-to-back.** Through practical, progressive policies, we committed to breaking the cycle of incarceration. For the first time ever, we allow juveniles to expunge their records, as well as for adults to expunge charges that are no longer crimes. We raised the felony larceny threshold, eliminated mandatory minimums for non-violent drug offenses, and limited solitary confinement.

We put these policies into action in the budget, **funding \$5 million for a brand-new community re-entry program, increased funding to divert people with mental**

health and substance use into treatment rather than jail, and created new initiatives to reduce bias at the Trial Court.

I never thought the day would come when we would pass comprehensive criminal justice reform. I will be holding expungement clinics, CORI sealing days, and other activities in the neighborhood to promote our new policies and ensure they’re implemented fairly.



I’ve continually worked on increasing access and participation in our democracy, from advocating for early voting to pre-registration for 16- and 17-year olds.

I was proud to vote for a bill establishing **automatic voter registration** here in Massachusetts. It is commonsense legislation that will help enroll nearly 700,000 voters, make our voter rolls more up-to-date, enhance the security of our electoral process, and encourage new voters to get involved.

Budget Highlights

While I mentioned some increases we secured in the final budget, check out a comprehensive summary on my website:
www.jeffreysanchez.org/19budget



Partnering for People

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