MASSACHUSETTS BUDGET PROCESS

Between July & October, agencies prepare spending plans for the next fiscal year. All agencies are required to hold a public hearing. Agency requests are submitted to the Executive Office for Administration & Finance (A&F).

Between October & December, A&F examines agency requests to align them with the Governor's policy goals. Governor files his budget (known as House One) in the third week after the January start of the session.

The House and Senate Committees on Ways & Means hold regional public hearings on the Governor's budget recommendations.

By the end of April, the House Committee on Ways & Means releases its budget recommendations for debate on the House Floor.

House members file amendments to increase appropriations or add new items.

Amendments are adopted or rejected during house floor debate. The amended budget is approved by the House.

By the third week in May, the Senate Committee on Ways & Means releases its budget recommendations for debate on the Senate Floor

Senate members file amendments to increase appropriations or add new items.

Amendments are adopted or rejected during Senate floor debate. The amended budget is approved by the Senate.

A six member House-Senate Conference Committee, made up of the House & Senate Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Ways & Means Committee, as well as the House & Senate ranking Republican member of the Ways & Means Committee meets over the course of June to produce a compromise budget, which is voted up or down by the full House and Senate. The conference committee report cannot be amended.

Once adopted the conference committee budget is sent to the Governor for his ten-day review. The Governor's signature on the budget marks it as the General Appropriations Act.

The Governor submits his proposed vetoes, reductions, or amendments, which are subject to legislative overrides. The Governor's vetoes are sustained unless both branches override them by a two-thirds vote.

Massachusetts fiscal years run from July 1- June 30. A fiscal year is named for the year which it ends.

The Governor's budget (House 1) is not debated by the legislature. It serves as the Governor's recommendations which are taken into consideration by the House and Senate in adopting their respective budget. House One also serves as an indicator of the Governor's potential veto message.

