

Patrick unveils \$26.7 billion budget plan

Steve LeBlanc

MELROSE — Gov. Deval Patrick unveiled highlights of his first state budget Tuesday, balancing increases in local aid and expanded kindergarten classes and community policing in part with cuts to Medicaid and other state programs.

The proposed \$26.7 billion spending plan represents a 4 percent increase over the \$25.6 percent budget approved last year. Patrick discussed the budget at an evening forum at Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall in Melrose.

The full budget — with more details on the level of cuts to specific programs — was released Wednesday. Patrick's budget will serve as a blue print for House and Senate leaders as they draft their own spending plans.

"Whether in Melrose or anywhere else in the Commonwealth, we need to face the facts that the same old thing is not enough to move us forward," Patrick said.

One of the biggest challenges facing Patrick was how to close what he is predicting will be a \$1.3 billion-plus budget gap while still trying to make good on a number of key campaign pledges, from reining in property taxes to hiring more police.

Patrick's plan addresses the spending gap in a number of ways, including making \$515 million in spend-

ing cuts, closing \$295 million in what Patrick has described as "unintended corporate tax loopholes" and using \$225 million from the state's rainy day fund and tobacco fund.

The proposal also makes \$179 million in cuts to Medicaid and another \$136 million in cuts to other state programs.

"Overall, it's a good faith effort to deal with a large and difficult problem," Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation President Michael Widmer said.

Advocates for those who receive services from the state said they were bracing for possible cuts.

"We would hope that the budget would preserve core services at a minimum of a cost of living adjustment to allow the same quality of services last year to be provided this year," said Michael Weekes of the

Massachusetts Council of Human Service Providers.

The plan makes a down payment on one of Patrick's key campaign pledges to hire 1,000 new police officers. The budget boosts the community policing program by about \$13 million to hire 250 officers.

It also includes more than a 5 percent increase — or about \$200 million — in local aid to cities and towns.

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Brandeis University theater performance graduate Tonye Patano (left) and former television soap queen Joan Collins (right) star in the catfight comedy "Legends!" The show begins a brief Boston run at the Citi Shubert Theatre next week, running through March 11. Please see the story in our Arts & Entertainment section on pg. 15. (Carol Rosegg photo)

Club 2012 stresses academic success of young black males

Michael Alison Chandler

ASHBURN, Va. — Twelve-year-old Alex Carter is an A student who loves science and reads a book a week. So it surprised his father when he announced last year that he didn't want to enroll in an honors class that his teacher recommended for the following term.

"That class is for the smart people, the nerds," Alex said.

His father replied, "Well, who are you?"

Alex is a junior league football player, an avid golfer and a lifelong

suburbanite. He's also one of only a handful of African American students in his seventh-grade class at Eagle Ridge Middle School in Ashburn. He dreams of becoming a professional athlete like his dad, Tom, who played cornerback for the Washington Redskins. But as he nears his teenage years in a predominantly white school in Loudoun County, his parents are concerned that he could abandon academic pursuits because he thinks they are better left to his white classmates.

That's why Tom and Renee Carter joined last year with about 15 fami-

lies, including the parents of nearly every black male sixth-grader, to push their sons to graduate on time in 2012 with options for the future and without lowering their expectations or test scores along the way. They call it Club 2012.

The group holds monthly house meetings, twice-weekly homework sessions, "rap sessions" between fathers and sons, and social or community service activities. The parents speak often with teachers and administrators, many of whom come to parent-organized events.

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Mayor Thomas M. Menino (center) recently took part in the promotion ceremony of two Boston Police officers. Officer Bruce Holloway was promoted from deputy superintendent to superintendent and Officer Gary French was promoted

from lieutenant detective to deputy superintendent. In the photo, newly appointed superintendent Holloway (left) is being pinned by his aunt, Jo-Ellis Christmas. (Photo courtesy of the City of Boston Mayor's Office)

Noted scholar Frank M. Snowden Jr. dies

Howard Manly

Frank M. Snowden Jr., a Howard University classicist for almost 50 years whose research into blacks in ancient Greece and Rome opened a new field of study, died Sunday at the age of 95 at the Grand Oaks assisted living home in Washington, D.C. He had congestive heart failure.

Snowden was a rarity in classics, but ancient history consumed him since his youth as a prize-winning student at the Boston Latin School and later at Harvard University. His body of work led to a National Humanities Medal in 2003, a top government honor for scholars, writers, actors and artists.

"A lion-hearted classicist, he is an Olympian man," said President Bush in his presentation of the award.

Much of Snowden's scholarship centered on one point: that blacks in the ancient world seemed to have been spared the virulent racism common to later Western civilization.

"The onus of intense color prejudice cannot be placed upon the shoulders of the ancients," he wrote.

Using evidence he found in literature and art, he showed that blacks were able not only to coexist with Greeks and Romans, but also were often revered as charioteers, fighters and actors. Because Romans and Greeks first encountered blacks as soldiers and mercenaries and not slaves or "savages," they did not classify them as inferior and seek ways to rationalize their enslavement, he said.

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