



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

House of Representatives

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--PRESS RELEASE--

House of Representatives Approves Funding to Support Operation of Trial Courts

For Immediate Release

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Boston –Representatives William M. Straus (D-Mattapoisett), and Susan Williams Gifford (R-Wareham) applauded the House of Representatives action today to approve a supplemental appropriations bill, which includes \$9 million for the Trial Courts in Massachusetts. This funding comes at a critical time for the court system which is currently reviewing closure of several court sessions including the Wareham District Court. The bill now moves to the State Senate for consideration.

“Both myself and Representative Williams Gifford believe that the \$9 million provided to the Trial Court in this legislation would be sufficient to prevent the unnecessary closure of critical courts in the state, including those in Plymouth County, such as Wareham District Court”, said Representative Straus. Representatives Williams Gifford and Straus have been active in seeking legislative alternatives to the closing of the Wareham Court which is vital to the law enforcement needs of southern Plymouth County. A budget rider to the current state spending law, proposed by the two legislators, successfully delayed any action in closing courthouses without sufficient notice and advance warning. Wareham District Court is on a current list of potential courthouse closures published earlier this year by the administrative arm of the state court system.

“The passage of this bill in the House today removes the argument that the proposed re-location and eventual closure of the Wareham District Court is needed. It is my hope that the Court Relocation Committee will now focus on those courts where facilities are underused and consolidation would be more appropriate”, said Representative Williams Gifford. “It is important to add that DA Tim Cruz has been instrumental in the effort of myself and Rep. Straus to take legislative action on behalf of the Wareham Court. He has been an important resource to both of us in demonstrating the regional importance of the court,” she added.

“I firmly believe that based upon the caseload, dislocation of court employees, excessive disruption to the public that would result from closing the Wareham District Court, and the lack of any substantial savings

from such a closure, it is now clear that the Wareham Court should remain open. I hope for prompt action by the State Senate, so that any cloud hanging over the future of the Wareham Court can be removed” said Representative Straus. “Much of the critical backup information which has helped Representative Williams Gifford and myself argue on behalf of Wareham has been provided by District Attorney Cruz,” Straus concluded.

Plymouth County District Attorney Tim Cruz stated “The Wareham District Court serves a vital function in this community and its closure would place an unfair burden on victims, witnesses and law abiding citizens who rely on this local court for justice. Representative Susan Williams Gifford and Representative Bill Straus have been on the forefront of the fight to keep this courthouse open.” He concluded, “They understand the critical role that the Wareham District Court has in the providing justice for this community. They took immediate legislative action and have been vigilant in their efforts to ensure that the Wareham District Court remains open. I am thankful for their hard work on behalf of the people of this community and hopeful that it will make the difference.”

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