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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 19, 2007

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PATRICK ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES WORKFORCE PRIORITIES FOR SPRINGFIELD

SPRINGFIELD— July 19, 2007 – Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development Suzanne M. Bump today announced that the Patrick Administration will partner with the City of Springfield and the Hampden County Regional Employment Board to assess the workforce needs of the City to bring about greater economic opportunity.

The workforce assessment will convene employers as well as local community and business organizations to prepare an inventory of existing workforce development programs and activities to assess what skill sets are needed to fill the jobs of today and in the future. The Patrick Administration will work with city officials to secure funding as part of this assessment process.

“Our administration will continue to identify ways to partner with the political, business and civic leaders in a collective effort to improve the economic well-being of the City of Springfield,” said Governor Deval Patrick.

Citing workforce development as a critical part of the Governor’s plan to revitalize Springfield, Bump said, “Springfield is working to get its fiscal house back in order. The Patrick Administration wants to partner with Springfield to grow and retain good jobs, strengthen business competitiveness and increase employment. In order to accomplish this, there needs to be a roadmap that tells us where we are and where we need to go.”

End goals include addressing the basic literacy of the city’s workforce by increasing public and private resources; establishing growth areas in key sectors and better aligning economic and workforce development strategies.

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Mayor Charles Ryan, who, in his capacity, also serves as Chief Elected Official of the Hampden County Regional Employment Board said, "I am delighted to join the state in this most important partnership, one that promises to benefit not only the residents of Springfield, but the business community also. Springfield has made great strides in getting the message out that we are open for business and as new companies continue to come into our city and existing ones continue to expand, there is nothing more important than insuring that we have a qualified workforce from which they can draw."

Bump also announced plans to have the state's 16 workforce boards, including the Hampden County Regional Employment Board, play a stronger role in the approval process of state Workforce Training Fund grant applications.

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