

IN THE NEWS



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2026 INITIATIVE PETITIONS FILED, SIGNATURE GATHERING SOON

On August 6, forty-seven initiative petitions were [filed with the Attorney General's office](#) for a review of their constitutionality and certification, the first step in a long process to have the questions appear before voters next November. Five constitutional amendments and forty-two proposals to amend, create or repeal a law were submitted. According to the [Secretary of State's ballot question timeline](#), August 6 was the deadline to submit petitions signed by ten original signers to the Attorney General. After approval by the Attorney General, petitioners must submit their certified petition to the Secretary of State's office by September 3 to request blank signature petition forms, which must be provided within 14 days of the request (by September 17). Signature gathering will begin when these forms become available. Signature gathering will last until November 19, the last day these forms must be submitted to local registrars for certification. 74,574 signatures must be certified for the petition to advance to the next step in the process. Many of the proposals are duplicative so the number of petitions that will be seeking signatures should shrink significantly. The second round of signature gathering will take place next May through mid-June if necessary. Only 12,429 signatures are needed for this step. Please contact the office if you have any questions on signature gathering or this process.

MA STATE REVENUE CONTINUES TO CLIMB

On August 8 the MA Department of Revenue (DOR) announced that MA tax collections totaled \$43.708 billion in fiscal year 2025, a 7.1% increase over fiscal year 2024 and 5.1% more than predicted. The state received \$38.282 billion from tax sources other than the surtax on wealthy households and capital gains in the fiscal year that ended June 30. This amounts to approximately \$52 million or one-tenth of a percentage point above the benchmark that the legislature and governor used to craft the fiscal 2025 budget. Last month the DOR certified preliminary estimates that the state collected \$2.987 billion from the surtax in fiscal 2025 and \$2.439 billion from taxes on capital gains. Because of statutory and constitutional requirements, those revenues will be put into reserves and spent on education and transportation investments. Budget-writers agreed to spend only \$1.3 billion in surtax funds through the fiscal 2025 annual budget, so the overage could be available for other spending proposals. In June, the final month of fiscal 2025, Massachusetts collected \$4.562 billion in taxes, which was \$67 million or 1.5% more than June 2024 and \$63 million or 1.4% above the monthly prediction. The report puts the state in a good position early in FY '26 should any expected cuts to federal funding continue.

LEGISLATION FUNDS MA SWITCH TO EBT CHIP CARDS

On April 3 a supplemental budget bill was filed which included \$15.5 million to help the Department of Transitional Assistance roll out electronic benefits transfer chip cards. The bill ([S 2575](#)) was signed into law on August 5. We will keep you updated.

LATEST U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS REPORT RELEASED

On August 1, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [reported](#) that the U.S. added just 73,000 jobs in July, while the unemployment rate ticked up to 4.2%. They reported that job gains in retail were minimal, and labor force participation declined, signaling a cooling labor market. For grocers, eased hiring competition may help staffing, but rising joblessness and slowing wages threaten consumer confidence and discretionary spending.

SHUTDOWN?

Congress is in recess until September 2, leaving just 28 calendar days to pass a FY 2026 budget or continuing resolution. Without taking either action, the government will shut down on October 1.