

House plans vote to reinstate human service salary plan over Gov. Patrick's veto

By Matt Murphy / State House News Service | Tuesday, July 17, 2012

The House on Tuesday plans to take a vote to fully restore a \$20 million salary reserve for human service providers that Gov. **Deval Patrick** cut in half with a veto when he signed the fiscal 2013 budget. Human service providers pressing for an override say low-paid workers have gone five years without a raise.

House Speaker Robert DeLeo said the House planned to override the governor's veto during its formal session on Tuesday, restoring the salary reserve that would give 31,500 workers earning under \$40,000 a year a roughly \$630 annualized raise.

Patrick proposed to cut the salary reserve in half to \$10 million and give the reduced funding to workers in a one-time payment. The governor proposed using the remaining \$10 million to support the implementation of rate reforms under Chapter 257 for human service workers.

In a letter to the Legislature, Patrick said those reforms aim to provide "more transparent, reliable and appropriate funding to contracted human services providers." Rep. David Linsky (D-Natick) and 107 other representatives sent a letter on Monday to DeLeo asking the speaker to support an override of the governor's veto of a salary reserve.

"This is an issue that has overwhelming support in the Legislature from both Democrats and Republicans," Linsky said. "We must maintain a strong human services safety net and this modest increase will go a long way to strengthen the industry. I thank my colleagues for their commitment to this important issue."

Providers' Council President & CEO Michael Weekes called the governor's veto "devastating" and said an override would "help low-paid staff, and strengthen the human services sector."