

06.16.08 - Life Science Bill Signing

Governor Patrick:

I can tell you that the Lieutenant Governor and I are very, very proud to be with all of you today to sign the Life Sciences Initiative into law. About a year ago, many of us here stood together to announce this 10-year, one billion dollar strategy to strengthen our position and extend our leadership in the world in this field, and here we are to make that commitment real.

Tomorrow, when the Life Sciences community gathers from around the world at the BIO Conference in California, Massachusetts will have a new and broader set of tools to help us compete. Massachusetts will have the largest registry of stem cell lines in the world, housed at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center in Worcester. Massachusetts will have a half-billion dollars in capital funding to offer entrepreneurs, for infrastructure investment and economic growth. Massachusetts will have 250 million dollars to offer researchers for fellowships, matching grants and loans to attract and retain rising stars in this field. Massachusetts will have incentives to offer companies to locate and expand here and five regional tech/innovation centers to extend these opportunities to every region of the Commonwealth.

And Massachusetts will have Dr. Harvey Lodish and his advisory board of distinguished scientists, educational and business leaders and the leadership of Dr. Susan Windham-Bannister to assure the Life Sciences funding decisions are based on sound science and not politics.

The people of Massachusetts have something too. They have the thousands of good jobs and good wages, from researchers to lab technicians to manufacturing workers, and the training opportunities to prepare for that world.

So, I want to thank the entire legislature for the overwhelming support you've given to this initiative. I'm grateful indeed. And I want to say a special thank you to Speaker DiMasi, my pal, to the Senate President who can-could not be here but is very much here in spirit today and to her predecessor Bob Travaligni, who has been a partner in this from the beginning and has stayed focused even after leaving office-I'm very glad to see you here today Bob. I want to acknowledge and thank Chairman Jack Hart, Chairman Dan Bosley, Chairman Mike Rodrigues, the House and Senate conferees, and people who don't often get thanked but their respective staffs, who we worked nearly to death to get this right. I appreciate very much all of you.

And I want to thank the members of the administration who toiled so hard and so well and with such dedication to get these results, including Secretary Dan O'Connell, Stan McGee, Maureen Flynn of his staff and David Simas, and most especially David Morales from my staff who's here, thank you.

[applause] Very, very proud of all of you.

Sometimes in this, in this business of ours people keep score in purely political terms. And there is no denying of the fact that signing this bill today makes clear, a clear and important political point that the legislature and the administration can work together on big and complex initiatives when we set our mind to it, but there are other measures, beyond political ones, arguably more lasting ones.

Over a century ago when Dr. Elliott P. Joslin founded this Center where we gather today, the life expectancy of patients diagnosed with diabetes was two years. Today, in thanks to large part to the work done here, people with type 1 and type 2 diabetes can live rich, full and long lives. Tomorrow there may be a cure for diabetes and that cure may well come right here in Massachusetts. That is an enormously important thing. [applause]

The point is that this initiative is about so much more than putting researchers and resources together; it's about Massachusetts advancing human healing. Yes, there will be many thousands of jobs for scientists and manufacturing workers, for researchers to lab technicians alike and we look forward to those. But there will also be the chance to apply the creativity and ingenuity of the people of Massachusetts, to relieving suffering and giving comfort and hope to millions of people around the world.

So I am proud and excited to sign this legislation, and of the means it offers through this bill, in this field today. But I am even more excited about what miracles may come tomorrow. I am delighted you could all be a part of this today. Thank you very much.