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TRANSPORTATION

Tibbits-Nutt is out, Eng is in

MassDOT shakeup comes after plaza mess

By Matthew Medsger
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The Bay State's Secretary of Transportation has stepped down and will be replaced on an interim basis by MBTA General Manager Phil Eng, according to the governor's office.

Eng will take charge effective immediately, but now-former

Transportation Secretary Monica Tibbits-Nutt will stay on until the end of the year in an advisory capacity.

"As General Manager of the MBTA, Phil Eng has overseen a transformative period for public transportation in our state and delivered the results that the people of Massachusetts have needed for a long time when it comes

to safety and reliability. He is a trusted leader with decades of transportation experience, and I know that he is the right person to lead MassDOT during this period," Gov. Maura Healey said in a statement.

The leadership shakeup comes as the state's transportation department is dealing with the fallout from a failed attempt to se-



MBTA GM Phil Eng speaks Thursday after being named acting Secretary of Transportation following resignation of Secretary Monica Tibbits-Nutt.

STUART CAVILL — BOSTON HERALD

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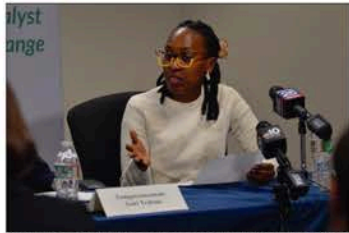
GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN

'COMPLETELY UNSUSTAINABLE'



PHOTOS BY PETER CURRIER — LOWELL SUN

Community Teamwork Inc. CEO Carl Howell, left, with Congresswoman Lori Trahan at CTI's Lowell headquarters Oct. 16, 2025 to highlight the challenges the organization's clients are facing amid a government shutdown with no end in sight.



Community Teamwork Inc. client Jacinta Baseka joined CTI CEO Carl Howell and Congresswoman Lori Trahan at the organization's headquarters in Lowell Oct. 16, 2025. On the 16th day of the government shutdown, Baseka said she worries about the projected rise in her health insurance premiums after health care funding was cut in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act signed by President Trump earlier this year.

CTI, Trahan highlight local impacts from shutdown, health care cuts

By Peter Currier
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LOWELL — Congresswoman Lori Trahan visited Community Teamwork Inc. in Lowell Thursday afternoon to highlight the impacts of federal cuts that will soon go into effect for Medicaid and other programs targeted for cuts in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act signed by President Trump in July.

The cutoff for health care funding is one of the main drivers behind Democrats in the House and Senate choosing not to support a Republican bill to reopen the federal government.

"As we gather here today, the

government has been shut down for 16 days — 16 days of uncertainty and avoidable harm," said Trahan. "President Trump and the Republicans in Washington refuse to work with Democrats to protect health care for millions of Americans and hundreds of thousands of people right here in Massachusetts."

Among the cuts will be premium tax credits offered from the Affordable Care Act, which is expected to significantly raise health insurance bills starting next year.

"For many families, this price

IMPACTS » PAGE 8

SHELTER SPENDING

GOP seeks overhaul on contract cash

By Lance Reynolds
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Top Republicans in Massachusetts say the time has come for reforms to how taxpayer-funded emergency contracts are reviewed and used in the state's emergency assistance shelter system.

The Senate Republican Caucus says it has filed "comprehensive legislation" that aims to place time limits on contracts and increase reviews, while expediting the public disclosure of procurements.

Republicans are looking to take action months after the State Auditor's Office found that Gov. Maura Healey's administration approved "improper and unlawful" no-bid contracts for food and transportation services, costing taxpayers millions, as part of the state-run emergency shelter system housing migrants and local families.

Reports of foul play continue to emerge. Republicans highlighted, as they pointed to a Boston Globe article from earlier this month on how a nonprofit was "paid nearly \$10 million by the state for emergency shelter services, outsourced meal catering to a local grocery chain owned by a board member of the same nonprofit."

The caucus announced the package of reforms just two days after the Herald published a report on the Healey administration no longer publishing a public, regular accounting of how much

OVERHAUL » PAGE 5



HERALD FILE PHOTO

State Sen. Bruce Tarr is leading a Republican push to reform taxpayer-funded emergency shelter contracts.

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Shakeup

FROM PAGE 1

curer new operators for the state's highway service plazas. The winning bidder for that project backed out amid conflict-of-interest allegations. Political watchers were quick to call for Tibbits-Nutt to go as a result of the failed bidding process.

The now-former Secretary ran afoul of her boss almost as soon as she took the job. Months after her appointment in 2023, she publicly floated the idea of installing tolls at the Bay State's border with New Hampshire. Healey had to walk back those comments shortly after, saying she had made clear to her transportation secretary that border tolls were not on the menu.

On Wednesday, MassDOT's Highway Adminis-

trator, Jonathan Gulliver, announced the department would restart the service plaza bidding process. With Tibbits-Nutt's departure, Gulliver is also getting a promotion and will serve as Undersecretary of Transportation in addition to his current duties.

Tibbits-Nutt is not the first departure seen under the Healey Administration. Leading her out the door were former Health and Human Services Secretary Kate Walsh, former Economic Development Secretary Yvonne Hao, and since-retired Public Safety Secretary Terrence Reidy. Secretary of Veterans Services Dr. Jon Santiago is scheduled to leave later this year.

Tibbits-Nutt will continue to receive her salary through the end of the year, according to the governor's spokesperson, while Eng will be paid just his salary

as GM of the MBTA. Eng made \$472,033 in 2024, according to state payroll records, while Tibbits-Nutt made \$196,248.

At a press conference given after the announcement of his elevation, Eng said that he was thankful for Tibbits-Nutt's service, and grateful for the governor's trust in him and Gulliver. The Interim Secretary didn't seem concerned about being asked to manage both the MBTA and MassDOT, saying "the significance of this is building strong teams."

"Once we're all moving in the same direction, they don't need to be told every single thing," Eng said. "We know how to operate. You know how to do highways and bridges. It really is empowering the team, giving them the tools, giving them the clear direction."

Eng said his vision for managing both agencies is

allowing the state's transportation networks to work together and "support communities, support housing, support business development, and I really want people to enjoy everything the Commonwealth and the whole northeast area has to enjoy."

Speaking at an unrelated event on Thursday, Healey echoed her new Transportation Secretary's sentiments, saying that if she or Eng didn't think he was capable of managing both jobs, she would not have offered him the position and Eng wouldn't have accepted.

"I think over the last three-and-a-half years, Phil Eng has demonstrated that he is a terrific manager. He gets it done. The trains are running on time, and a lot has happened because of his leadership and his management. And I expect that he will bring that

same level of management and leadership statewide as he takes over the entire transportation system," she said.

Both Eng and Healey said they were unsure what lies in the future for Tibbits-Nutt, other than that she would be returning to the private sector. Neither identified the service plaza problem as the reason for her departure, but State Sen. Ryan Fattman said it was a factor.

"That's B.S. — we call that 'Beacon Speak' — that's total crap," he said.

Fattman, who sits on the Senate oversight committee which was attempting to get to the bottom of the service plaza request for proposal problems before the winning bidder backed out, said the entire situation was an "unmitigated disaster" that falls squarely on Tibbits-Nutt.

"She should have been

fired. This whole thing is a disaster," he said.

He also laid some blame at the governor's feet, saying it was a perfect example of "leading from behind."

"There have been controversies at MassDOT for years — and it should have been fixed long ago," Fattman said. "This is just an example of leading from behind and it's really frustrating."

Paul Craney, the executive director of the Massachusetts Fiscal Alliance, said that Tibbits-Nutt's ouster is "long overdue."

"From the start, Secretary Tibbits-Nutt's conduct and policies revealed a deep hostility toward taxpayers and ordinary commuters. Her departure is a necessary first step if the Healey administration has any interest in restoring accountability at MassDOT," Craney said.



Community Teamwork Inc. Program Manager Linda DeLouchrey is the primary caretaker for her father. In an Oct. 16, 2025 press conference with CTI CEO Carl Howell and Congressman Lori Trahan, DeLouchrey said she fears the impacts of cuts to health care and social security funding on her family and clients of CTI.



Congresswoman Lori Trahan speaks about the impacts she is seeing from the ongoing government shutdown Oct. 16, 2025 during a press conference at Community Teamwork in Lowell.



Community Teamwork CEO Carl Howell warned about the impacts of the ongoing government shutdown on his organization's clients during an Oct. 16, 2025 press conference with Congressman Lori Trahan.

Impacts

FROM PAGE 1

hike will be completely unsustainable, forcing families to cut corners in their household budgets. Or worse, to drop their health

care coverage altogether," said Trahan.

CTI CEO Carl Howell said the ongoing shutdown "is halting the very programs that keep families warm, children learning and our community safe."

"At Community Teamwork we run over 30 pro-

grams that touch every corner of this region. The thread that ties them together is the federal funding we receive," said Howell. "Especially the Community Services Block Grant ... CSBG gives us the flexibility to solve problems quickly, locally and to respond to

emergencies.

"If that funding stops, the door closes," Howell said later. "When that door closes, there is nowhere else for families to go."

Howell also highlighted CTI's fuel assistance for families through the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, which, in addition to directly supporting low-income households struggling to afford their energy bills, contributed \$9 million to the local economy last year.

"If that stops, the ripple effects hit everyone from the driver delivering the oil to the homeowner trying to stay warm," said Howell.

"The longer Washington remains closed, the colder, the hungrier, and the less stable our communities remain," Howell said later.

With Trahan and Howell was Jacinta Baseka, a CTI client and mother of two who was recently disqualified from MassHealth after she got a \$2 hourly increase in her salary. Baseka said CTI helped her by providing reliable child care through the organization's Head Start program, when child care costs can be hundreds or thousands of dollars monthly.

"Last year I enrolled in school ... something I would never have done without Head Start," said Baseka.

CTI Fuel Assistance Program Director Linda DeLouchrey said her own 76-year-old father is a client of the program. DeLouchrey said her father is bedridden and suffers from dementia, and without the energy assistance, she said she would not be able to sustain the \$200 to \$400 monthly energy bills. The same goes for other CTI clients.

"I have 80-year-olds, 90-year-olds that need oil, and when they call and tell me they don't have heat, we get them emergency funding to help get them \$150 ... They call thanking God, thanking us for being there, able to help them stay warm," said DeLouchrey.

"People have to choose between buying food and heating their home. Without this program, it would be devastating," DeLouchrey said later.

Howell noted during a question-and-answer period that CTI's fuel assistance is in jeopardy from both the shutdown and the OBBB cuts that have yet to go into effect.

Trahan told the room

the shutdown did not appear to have an end in the foreseeable future, and earlier Thursday the Senate held a 10th vote on the same Republican-backed bill to reopen the government, but it once again failed to sway any Democrats to get the 60 votes needed to pass.

"Everyone knows when you need Democrat votes to pass, you need to work with Democrats. You need to actually have conversations to pass a budget that makes sense and protects the people they represent," said Trahan. "They are completely not engaged with Democrats on passing their budget, and worse, (Republicans) are on vacation right now and they haven't been in Washington for four weeks."

The end of the shutdown, Trahan said, will require Republican lawmakers to "confront the health care cuts they have already made" and the imminent hikes to health care costs for millions of Americans.

"We have been clamoring to work with them. We are not asking for the things they go tell folks we are asking for," said Trahan of congressional Republicans.

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