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BAKER ADMINISTRATION CONTINUES TO UNDERFUND ADULT EDUCATION *MISSES KEY OPPORTUNITY TO INVEST IN MASSACHUSETTS' FUTURE*

BOSTON, MA – Earlier today, Governor Charlie Baker released his budget proposal for FY 2019, recommending that the Commonwealth allocate just \$28.2 million to adult basic education programs in the coming year, an amount that is \$1.4 million - or roughly 5 percent - below current levels. This marks the third straight proposal from the Baker Administration that has sought to cut funding for adult education, even as thousands Massachusetts adults continue to lack the basic skills they need to build better lives for themselves and their families.

"Governor Baker has yet again missed a prime opportunity to invest in Massachusetts' future," said Jeff McLynch, Director of the Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education (MCAE). McLynch continued, "At a time when companies across the Commonwealth are struggling to find the employees they need, it is simply indefensible for his administration to suggest reducing funding for one of the key means by which Massachusetts adults prepare themselves for the workforce."

At present, state-funded adult basic education (ABE) programs serve approximately 19,000 Massachusetts adults in classes ranging from basic reading, writing, and math, to English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), to preparation for US citizenship or high school equivalency certification. At the same time, another 19,000 adults continue to wait for a place in a classroom to become available to them. Despite such high demand, state funding for ABE has fallen by 30 percent since FY 2001, after adjusting for inflation.

"On behalf of the thousands of adult students and educators across the Commonwealth, MCAE urges the Legislature to set aside the Governor's recommendation and to make a meaningful investment in Massachusetts' future by providing \$34.5 million for adult education in its forthcoming budget," concluded McLynch.

Based in Boston, MCAE is statewide membership organization dedicated to championing the right of all adults to acquire the 21st century literacy, English language, and numeracy skills that lead to economic prosperity, strong families, and vibrant communities. Since 1992, MCAE has advanced quality adult basic education in the Commonwealth through professional development opportunities, strategic communications, and sophisticated advocacy. For more about MCAE, visit www.mcae.net.