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Fattman Again Postpones Police Bill Debate

For the second day in a row, Republican Sen. Ryan Fattman put a hold on a sweeping police reform bill Democratic leaders are working to pass, forcing the Senate into the weekend without having voted on a major priority that they're aiming to get done this month. Fattman, a Sutton Republican, has said that the lack of a public hearing on the bill and the limited time given to members to review the legislation and its amendments have made it unfair to press forward. The bill was introduced by leaders on Monday, and senators proposed 145 amendments. The move by Fattman to lay the bill on the table again Friday pushes off debate until at least the next formal session. Senate leaders did not immediately say when that would be. "We all want to get to yes. We're just not there yet. It's not ready for prime time. Hopefully we get there," Fattman said. Fattman said there have also been Democrats encouraging of his efforts to buy more time to review the bill. Senate Minority Leader Bruce Tarr had said earlier on his way into session that the 17 hours from when Fattman made his motion to delay debate on Thursday and the start of the 10 a.m. session on Friday had been productive. But he could not say with certainty that someone would not again try to delay debate. "There's no question that the extra amount of

time makes a difference and we're still working through the bill, analyzing it, hearing from people and there's a lot of two-way communication going on, and that is a critically important thing, particularly in the absence of a public hearing," Tarr told the News Service on his way to the rare Friday session. While the Senate's rules do not speak to how many times a bill can be tabled, presiding officers have traditionally allowed bills to be tabled three times before ruling the motion to be dilatory. Senate President Karen Spilka went out of her way after the bill was tabled Friday to note that it was "for the second time." On Thursday night, Spilka and Sens. Sonia Chang-Diaz and William Brownsberger issued a statement arguing that a public debate was the best way to vet the bill. "The Senate is going to stay focused on what we set out to do with this bill: protect the lives of our Black and brown residents from systemic racism and institutionalized violence," the Senate leaders said. "We know that these conversations are difficult, and the actions we're called to take will not be easy, but it is our responsibility to begin to respond to the voices who have called on us to make these changes. We welcome further discussion on the very important provisions of this bill — and the right way to do that is to proceed with debate on the bill and its amendments." - Matt Murphy/SHNS

To-Go Cocktails Bill On the Move in Senate

[Story Developing] A major multi-year transportation borrowing bill and a bill allowing restaurants to sell cocktails to go emerged in the Senate on Friday, teeing up two high-profile legislative proposals as lawmakers race to wrap up priorities before the July 31 end of formal sessions. The Senate Ways and Means Committee polled its members Friday morning on a takeout cocktail bill (S 2740) and it was promptly passed. A second \$16.9 billion bond bill to fund infrastructure and transportation improvements (H 4547) also emerged from the committee. Movement on the bond bill comes four months after the House approved a roughly \$18 billion version. While the Senate is moving forward with the borrowing legislation, it still has not touched a related tax and fee package for transportation that the House approved in tandem with its version of the bond bill. House leaders said the combination of gas tax, corporate minimum excise tax, and ride-hailing fee increases, as well as application of the sales tax to rental car purchases, would generate more than \$500 million per year. The Senate's inaction on the revenue side of the transportation issue has generated tension between the two branches. Lawmakers must finish work on all significant bills that require roll calls by July 31, and anything they want to ensure is veto-proof needs to be done 10 days earlier so they have time to override a potential veto from Gov. Charlie Baker. - Chris Lisinski/SHNS

Baker: "Shared Principles" Should Be Police Bill Focus

Gov. Charlie Baker told the chair of the Black and Latino Legislative Caucus on Thursday that he shared the Springfield Democrat's interest in keeping the debate over policing reform focused in order to not squander the opportunity to get a bill done this month. Rep. Carlos Gonzalez wrote a letter to Baker and the Democratic leaders of the House and Senate this week asking that as the Senate considers a wide-ranging criminal justice bill

this week that they not lose sight of the core reforms requested by the caucus at the start of the negotiations on reform. Senators have filed 145 amendments to the bill 73-page bill, and the House has yet to produce formal legislation. But formal sessions for the year are scheduled to end after July, leaving little time for negotiation. Baker responded to Gonzalez in writing on Thursday, outlining the legislation he filed that would require additional training for police and establish a process to certify police officers and remove their their certification for certain types of misconduct, including the excessive use of force. "There are myriad issues before us in these unprecedented times, but I believe the principles we share in common present a rare opportunity to act quickly and concisely to create a long overdue system for certifying law enforcement officers," Baker wrote in a letter to Gonzalez "I share your commitment to reaching consensus and giving the public the transparent, accountable law enforcement system they deserve. Working together with the House and Senate on the specific, shared principles outlined by the Black and Latino Legislative Caucus and proposed in our legislation, we can increase accountability in law enforcement, instill the most up-to-date, community-oriented policing skills, and protect all of Massachusetts' cities and towns," Baker said. The Senate on Friday had hoped to resume debate over its bill, but Sen. Ryan Fattman laid it on the table for the second day in a row after saying Thursday there had been insufficient time to review all the policy proposals contained in the legislation. - Matt Murphy/SHNS

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