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## Senator Karen Spilka Bio

Framingham State University

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**Senator Karen E. Spilka** is the State Senator for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Middlesex and Norfolk district, which includes the towns of Ashland, Framingham, Franklin, Holliston, Hopkinton, Medway and Natick in the MetroWest region of Massachusetts. She serves as the Chair of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, the committee that oversees the budget and finances of the Commonwealth. She also chairs the Biotech Legislative Caucus and the Tech Hub Caucus. Senator Spilka's legislative accomplishments include efforts in a broad range of areas including economic development, jobs creation, education, juvenile justice and services for the elderly and disabled communities.

Senator Spilka was first elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives in the fall of 2001, where she served three years before her election to the State Senate in January 2005. In the Senate she has served as the Chair of the Joint Committee on Children, Families and Persons with Disabilities, the Chair of the Joint Committee on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies and the Majority Whip. Prior to becoming a legislator, Senator Spilka was in private practice as an arbitrator and mediator, specializing in labor and employment law and community and court mediation. In addition, she has been a facilitator and fact finder in disputes in the public and private sectors, as well as a social worker and trainer of adult mediation and school-based peer mediation programs, collaborative-based collective bargaining and conflict resolution strategies.

Senator Spilka is a graduate of Northeastern Law School and holds a B.S. from Cornell University. She has been married for over thirty years to Joel S. Loitherstein, an environmental engineer, and has three children and two dogs.