Urban legislators from 11 cities to form caucus

June 20, 2008 6:00 AM

BOSTON — Rep. Antonio F.D. Cabral, D-New Bedford, has formed a caucus of urban legislators from cities outside of Boston to fight for common interests.

"Too often cities like ours are overlooked by Boston or are pitted against each other when funding and other policy decisions are made," Cabral said in a statement. "We decided it was time to stop the circular firing squads and get these cities working together."

The legislative caucus is expected to include senators and representatives from 11 cities: Brockton, Fall River, Fitchburg, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, Pittsfield, New Bedford, Springfield and Worcester.


The caucus held its first meeting last week, beginning with a presentation from former Fall River mayor Edward M. Lambert Jr., who is now the director of the Urban Initiative at UMass Dartmouth. The Urban Initiative is working with MassINC on issues related to the so-called Gateway Cities.

The 11 Gateway Cities account for one third of the manufacturing jobs that the state has lost since 1980. They have 30 percent of the state residents who are living below the poverty line, even though they represent only 15 percent of the population.

The caucus will have a broad agenda, including transportation, housing, economic development, and state aid to schools and municipal government.

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