

# State legislators launch tech industry caucus

By [Hiawatha Bray](#) | GLOBE STAFF MARCH 01, 2013

Despite being a dominant sector in the Massachusetts economy, the high-tech community does not have its own dedicated constituency in the Legislature.

Soon, though, there will be a Tech Hub Caucus of Massachusetts legislators, thanks to Democratic [Senator Karen Spilka](#) of Ashland, who announced the new group at a conference Thursday at the State House. Spilka said the caucus will focus on providing more support for this crucial sector of the Massachusetts economy.

“We need to educate both sides,” Spilka said. “The legislators, to get a better understanding of the sector and its needs, and we also have to work with the private sector to show them that we want to be a partner.”

The event was attended by executives from technology companies and featured demonstrations of locally developed products by companies such as [iRobot Corp.](#), of Bedford.

The event was sponsored by several technology industry associations, including the [Massachusetts Technology Leadership Council](#), the [Massachusetts Innovation & Technology Exchange](#), and the [Massachusetts Technology Collaborative](#).

Gregory Bialecki, the state’s secretary of Housing and Economic Development, said that despite being a pillar of the economy, the technology sector is



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**Gregory Bialecki, secretary of Housing and Economic Development in 2009.**

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*Progress*

“somehow viewed as the fun new kids on the block.”

Bialecki said the formation of the Tech Hub Caucus showed that “the tech sector is finally getting closer to getting the recognition that it deserves, in terms of state government and state policy.”

Patrick Larkin, director of the Innovation Institute at the technology collaborative, said state government could do much more to assist the growth of technology companies. For example, government agencies could purchase products from start-up firms.

“That is a tremendous boost,” Larkin said. “Being their first customer, a technology company will tell you that’s huge. That’s everything.”

Spilka said she had no idea why the Legislature had never before established a technology caucus, even though Massachusetts has been a center of electronic and medical technology for decades.

“It’s something that’s really needed,” Spilka said, because lawmakers and technology business leaders should start talking to one another.

Spilka said that she asked technology business leaders at the event if they had ever been to the State House; about half said no.

“We want them to show up more,” she said, “and talk about what their needs are.”

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