

Article 29
Non-Binding Resolution:
Support Fair Share Amendment

Natick Finance Committee, March 29 2002

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Text of the Fair Share Amendment

Article 44 of the Massachusetts Constitution is hereby amended by adding the following paragraph at the end thereof:

To provide the resources for quality public education and affordable public colleges and universities, and for the repair and maintenance of roads, bridges and public transportation, all revenues received in accordance with this paragraph shall be expended, subject to appropriation, only for these purposes. In addition to the taxes on income otherwise authorized under this Article, there shall be an additional tax of 4 percent on that portion of annual taxable income in excess of \$1,000,000 (one million dollars) reported on any return related to those taxes. To ensure that this additional tax continues to apply only to the commonwealth's highest income taxpayers, this \$1,000,000 (one million dollars) income level shall be adjusted annually to reflect any increases in the cost of living by the same method used for federal income tax brackets. This paragraph shall apply to all tax years beginning on or after January 1, 2023.

Article XLIV

Full power and authority are hereby given and granted to the general court to impose and levy a tax on income in the manner hereinafter provided. Such tax may be at different rates upon income derived from different classes of property, but shall be levied at a uniform rate throughout the commonwealth upon incomes derived from the same class of property. The general court may tax income not derived from property at a lower rate than income derived from property, and may grant reasonable exemptions and abatements. Any class of property the income from which is taxed under the provisions of this article may be exempted from the imposition and levying of proportional and reasonable assessments, rates and taxes as at present authorized by the constitution. This article shall not be construed to limit the power of the general court to impose and levy reasonable duties and excises.

Article 29 is a Non-Binding Resolution

- Natick Town Meeting, and other local government bodies, are asked to vote in support of this amendment.
- Town Meeting appropriates state and local funding for public education, and supplements state funding for transportation.
- Natick (like all cities and towns) is dependent on state aid, and has limited opportunities for additional locally generated revenue outside the limits of Prop 2½:
 - Operating and debt exclusion overrides
 - Local option taxes (meals and hotel/motel, accepted in 2009-2010)
 - Community Preservation Act

Representative state funding for education and transportation

Chapter 70 (inflows) (public education)	
FY 2019	\$9,762,979
FY 2020	\$10,120,767
FY 2021	\$10,204,682
FY 2022	\$10,362,782
FY 2023 (estimate)	\$12,218,845

Chapter 90 (inflows) (local roads)	
FY 2019	\$975,338
FY 2020	\$970,789
FY 2021	\$966,686
FY 2022	\$961,281

MBTA and RTA Assessments (outflows)	
FY 2019	\$798,755
FY 2020	\$821,016
FY 2021	\$855,193
FY 2022	\$816,025
FY 2023 (estimate)	\$854,245

Transportation investments

- Chapter 90 funding is typically about \$1 million, or less than one-third of what is required to keep our roads in a state of good repair
- We typically appropriate an additional \$2 million+ annually for road and sidewalk repair
- This does not include funding for major local roadway projects
- We additionally receive state grants for Complete Streets, while we also benefit from state/federally funded projects on local or state-owned roads, bridges and trails
- The local share of public transportation costs is funded through MBTA and RTA assessments

Education investments

- Chapter 70 funding is typically about \$10 million, a fraction of our operating budget
- Anticipated increases for FY 2023 are atypical
- State funding does not keep up with cost increases

Income inequality

- Massachusetts has a flat income tax
- The wealth gap is growing in Massachusetts and around the country
- The Fare Share amendment seeks to generate state revenue equitably, and invest this revenue in areas that contribute to underfunded public priorities

Article 29 Resolution

- Supports passage of the Amendment, and, pursuant to passage:
- Urges the legislature to increase funding for local roads to maintain a state of good repair
- Urges the legislature to increase funding for education consistent with increased local costs

Text of the resolution (page 1 of 3)

WHEREAS, Massachusetts needed new investments in our transportation and public education systems even before the COVID-19 pandemic, and those investments are needed more than ever to lift our economy into an equitable and long-lasting recovery;

WHEREAS, the best way to help working families and rebuild a strong economy for us all is to make sure that we have quality public schools for our children, affordable public higher education, and a reliable transportation system; and

WHEREAS, for Massachusetts to compete against other regions around the nation and the globe, we need modern, reliable transportation including safe, well-maintained roads and bridges, quality public transportation, and convenient ways to walk and bike around town; and

WHEREAS, Natick has miles of deficient roads, notwithstanding millions of dollars in local investment; and

Text of the resolution (page 2 of 3)

WHEREAS, students need a well-rounded education, founded on a rich and varied curriculum that includes science, technology, engineering, and math, music, art, and athletics; and

WHEREAS, state funding for Natick public schools has not kept pace with expenses, and

WHEREAS, major investments in public education are needed to help students recover academically, socially, and emotionally from the COVID-19 pandemic; and tuitions and fees at our public colleges are among the highest in the country, forcing students to take on enormous debt just to receive a degree; and

WHEREAS, new state revenue is necessary to rebuild crumbling roads and bridges, invest in fast and reliable public transportation, expand opportunities for healthy walking and bicycling, improve our public schools from Pre-K through college, expand access to vocational and technical training, and make public higher education affordable again, and

Text of the resolution (page 3 of 3)

WHEREAS, wealthy Massachusetts residents saw their investments grow during the pandemic while working families struggled, and Massachusetts' wealthiest residents should pay their fair share to support our communities and grow our economy;

THEREFORE, let it be resolved that Natick Town Meeting supports the proposed Fair Share Amendment on the November 2022 State Election Ballot that would create an additional tax of four percentage points on annual income above one million dollars and dedicate the funds raised by this tax to quality public education, affordable public colleges and universities, and for the repair and maintenance of roads, bridges, and public transportation, and furthermore, that Natick Town Meeting urges the legislature, pursuant to passage of said amendment, to annually authorize or appropriate funding to maintain Natick roads in a state of good repair and to increase funding for public education consistent with the cost increases for the Natick public schools.

Thanks to the Finance Committee for your questions and comments!