



Boston City Council

Erin J. Murphy

Councilor At-Large

Dear Colleagues,

As we confront the pressing issue of escalating property taxes that threaten the stability of our communities, it is imperative that we consider effective, immediate solutions to provide relief to our residents. I urge you to support the proposed increase of the residential exemption to 40%, a measure that offers tangible benefits to our homeowners.

Procedural Concerns and the Need for Equal Consideration

I have concerns regarding the process surrounding this issue. Docket #0236 was brought forward with a favorable committee report, yet Docket #0142—the Council's Home Rule Petition to increase the residential tax exemption to 40%—was not given the same consideration. This Home Rule, which I sponsored along with Councilor Worrell, was filed on December 11, well before the Mayor's Home Rule petition.

After the January 27th hearing, where four different dockets were discussed, we were assured that a second hearing would take place to address outstanding questions and ensure each proposal received the appropriate review. Unfortunately, only the Mayor's Home Rule was advanced, neglecting an important opportunity for a fair and thorough discussion. By limiting the review process, we have done a disservice to our constituents who deserve multiple, well-vetted solutions to the property tax crisis.

Proposed Amendment to Docket #0236

To ensure our residents receive the relief they deserve, I am proposing an amendment to Docket #0236 to incorporate the residential exemption increase to 40%.

Amendment Language:

SECTION 1. Docket #0236 is hereby amended by inserting the following language after Section 6:

Section 7. Notwithstanding the provisions of Chapter 59, Section 5C, of the General Laws, or any other general or special law to the contrary, the City of Boston is hereby authorized to adopt a residential exemption of up to forty percent (40%) of the average assessed value of all Class One-Residential parcels within the City of Boston. The City of Boston may determine annually the percentage of the residential exemption, provided that it does not exceed forty percent (40%) of the average assessed value of Class One-Residential parcels.

The Need for Multiple Options

The Mayor's previous tax plan failed in the Senate last year. It is in our constituents' best interest to send a petition to the State House that includes multiple options, increasing the likelihood that at least one measure succeeds. Our colleagues at the State House have expressed interest in approving an increase in the residential tax exemption. We should not limit their choices.

Benefits of Increasing the Residential Exemption to 40%

1. Direct and Immediate Relief:

- Immediate tax reduction for owner-occupied homeowners.
- Addresses the recent surge in property tax assessments.

2. Proven Effectiveness:

- The current residential exemption has already proven to be an effective tool for mitigating tax burdens.
- Increasing it builds on a successful framework that aids seniors, fixed-income families, and long-term residents.

3. Complementary to Other Proposals:

- A higher residential exemption is a straightforward and immediate method of tax relief.
- It can be combined with other tax relief measures for a more comprehensive approach.

4. Preserving Community Stability:

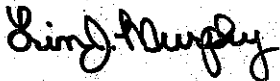
- Prevents displacement of long-term residents.
- Ensures Boston remains a city where all residents can thrive.

Fiscal Responsibility

I believe we must spend less. The last four years, we had the luxury of \$695 million in COVID-19 federal funding. That money is now gone. As we await the Mayor's upcoming budget, I hope it reflects responsible spending cuts to prevent seniors, city employees, and residents on fixed incomes from bearing the burden of increased taxes.

This amendment directly addresses the current financial concerns our residents face. We owe it to them to rise above politics and advocate for all reasonable solutions. I urge you to support this amendment and ensure that we present multiple, fully vetted paths to relief.

Sincerely,



Erin J. Murphy
Boston City Councilor At-Large