



The Activist News

Citizens for Limited Taxation

The Commonwealth Activist Network

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The Massachusetts Taxpayer Activist's Newsletter

□ August - September 2000

Tax Rollback Goes to the Ballot!

After four years of hard work, continuous expense, and a total of well over 200,000 signatures, finally the 11-year old "temporary" income tax hike will be on the ballot.

On July 5th, the day after Independence Day, CLT and Gov. Cellucci's Tax Rollback Committee turned in 29,435 certified signatures; the Secretary of State allowed 18,864 – almost twice

the required 9,517. This assured no teachers union signature challenges again, and a position on the November ballot.

The long-overdue promised tax rollback will appear as Question 4, and a "yes" vote will keep the promise.

Thanks to all the CLT volunteers and members for their years of perseverance in getting the tax rollback question on the ballot.

What You Can Do Now

If you remember Question 3 in 1990, you'll recall we were overwhelmed with phone calls, speaking requests, opposition. We're preparing for this now. Gov. Cellucci's Tax Rollback Committee is planning TV and radio ads; CLT is in charge of the grassroots effort and also plans to buy some radio time soon.

1. Chip Faulkner will be calling petition drive coordinators to be the regional or local campaign coordinators; if you want to volunteer call him at 508-384-0100. Coordinators will help distribute campaign signs and contact CLT activists to be at the polls on election day.

2. From now until November, write a short, pointed letter to the editor in response to any opposition statement, column or editorial seen in daily or weekly newspapers.

3. Call talk shows in support of Question 4. Many issues lend themselves to the subject: any taxpayer-funded scandal or exposé of state government waste or abuse of power ("Just take some of the money away from them, vote Yes on 4"); morality in politics ("Politicians must keep their promises, Yes on 4").

4. Sponsor or attend forums. If you have a taxpayer, political party or civic group, see if it would invite similar groups in town or nearby communities to share sponsorship of a forum (debate) on Question 4 or the ballot questions in general. In order to get speakers, however, you will have to show an effort to get a large turnout and/or local media (reporters, cable TV) coverage.

When there is a debate in the area, bring neighbors, relatives and friends to support our side.

TEAM is holding organizational meetings around the state. The one held locally was sparsely attended, so CLT staff and activists almost equaled theirs. Unless they are on private property, the public (you) may be able to attend. You don't have to debate or be an expert, just ask some pertinent questions ("But shouldn't the state keep its promise that the income tax hike would be temporary? Why are you talking about cuts? Isn't the rollback phased in? What about the state surpluses and savings accounts?")

5. Put a sign on your lawn and a bumper sticker on your car. The simple campaign slogan is "Keep the Promise – Yes on 4."

Four Question 4 Talking Points

1. **"Keep the Promise: 5%"** – The Legislature said that the 1989 income tax hike to 5.75 percent would be temporary. (Any discussion of the 1990 tax hike to 6.25 percent is irrelevant; that tax hike was also temporary and the rate is due to drop to 5.75 percent next year. We are addressing only the 5.75 to 5 percent that was promised in 1989. Just keep repeating this and don't let our opponents confuse the issue).

2. **"Vote Yes on 4, or they'll be back for more."** We must prevent another fiscal crisis like the one we faced in 1989 that led to the "temporary" tax hike. State spending has almost doubled since then; still Massachusetts is "swimming in money," with over \$2 billion in state "rainy day" slush funds. Our income tax rollback will slow the "good times" overspending that causes service

cuts and new taxes when the economy slows down. We are not just phasing down the income tax rate to 5 percent; we are possibly preventing another rate hike in the future to 6.5 or even 7 percent.

3. **"Protect Massachusetts' Future"** – Other tax cuts of the '90s have protected our economy and kept us competitive, but our income tax burden is still the highest and our spending, per capita, is still 7th highest in the country.

4. **"A tax cut is a pay raise for taxpayers"** – Let taxpayers and their families keep more of their own money to save, invest, or give to the charity of their choice; they can decide better than the Legislature, which just voted itself another pay raise (*see Beacon Hill Happens, Page 5*).

Frog Soup

By Chip Ford

This column is scheduled to be published in the Boston Herald in the next day or two, as this newsletter goes to press.

I've never understood why anyone would want to boil a frog, but folklore provides the recipe to do so without the frog jumping from the pot. You drop it into cold water then slowly increase the temperature until, *voilà*, you have frog soup.

So it is with lawmaking. For those who won't be satisfied until they have everything that's ours – whether it's our money, our property, or what's left of our liberty – more is never enough.

They grab what they can get away with today ... and come back for the rest later. They are a patient and persistent lot.

The More Is Never Enough (MINE) crowd says or does anything – *anything* – to grab what they can today, then totally disregards it when they return for more tomorrow.

In 1986 and again in '94, voters were promised that if we would give up “just a little bit of freedom” and accept a mandatory seat belt law, it would be enforced only if a motorist was stopped for another offense. But that was then (voters bought the promise the second time) and this is now. A bill to change the law to “primary enforcement” – a motorist can be stopped and ticketed *just* for not using a seat belt – was narrowly defeated by a filibuster in this legislative session's final moments. It will be back, for they are patient and persistent.

It's the same in the gun control debate. “Be reasonable” the gun-grabbers implored decades ago – and gun-owners mistakenly acquiesced. That opened the floodgates to over 20,000 “reasonable” gun-control laws and the degradation of the Second Amendment. Banning “Saturday Night Specials,” “Assault Weapons” and “Cop-Killer Bullets” along with a multitude of other “common sense, reasonable” new infringements poured through the breach ... and that's *still* not enough. More never is for them until they have it all.

The federal income tax, passed by constitutional amendment in 1913, was a small tax of one percent on only “the very wealthy.” The federal telephone tax was passed to fund the Spanish-

American War and lingers on. The 3 percent state sales tax was only temporary, until it was raised to 5 percent. The Dukakis Surtax was temporary, but persisted until taxpayers finally put its repeal on the ballot.

The Big Dig was to cost \$2.8 billion and be completed years ago, we were assured when it was being pitched in the early '80s. Nobody honestly believed that, but it got slam-dunked through. Today the price tag has ballooned to over \$13 billion and it's completion date is still off in the misty future. Did we learn anything? Nope, we taxpayers just got saddled with buying the Red Sox a new stadium with another promise of limited exposure.

The MINE crowd says and does anything it takes to have their way with us today. And they are a patient and persistent lot.

Eleven years ago they promised their income tax rate increase

was “temporary.” Now they deny the promise, and assert they can't be held to it anyway. “That was then and this is now!” Besides, they tell us today, government can make better use of our money than we can.

Why do they make such promises, why do they impose “solutions” that never quite solve the latest “crisis”? Because *More Is Never Enough* until they have it all.

The bigger question is, when are we going to start laughing in their faces when they shamelessly lie to us?

Our opportunity arrives in November with the income tax rollback ballot question.

The MINE crowd says and does *anything* to have their way with us, whatever it takes. They grab what they can today, then come back for the rest later. They cling tenaciously to what they've taken from us because as far as they're concerned, “*It's mine now!*”

It's time for us frogs to rouse ourselves, awaken to our plight. Vote “Yes” on Question 4 and jump out of the simmering pot while you still can.



The Telegram & Gazette • Worcester, Mass.
March 30, 2000



The Outsiders' Track

by Barbara Anderson

The first debate of the income tax rollback campaign was held before the **Alliance for Amesbury**, a local business organization. Debaters were yours truly vs. **Michael Widmer** of the so-called **Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation** with its "responsible alternative." **Chip Ford** came along to present the newspaper quotes about the 1989 "temporary" rate hike, which **Chip Faulkner** had made into enlarged portable posters for such occasions. When we were finished, Alliance director, **Dennis Welcome**, seemed to sum up the response of the crowd when he said, "I appreciate hearing both points of view; however, it seems to me a promise is a promise."

The first forum scheduled for this fall will be in historic Lexington and is co-sponsored by the Democratic and the Republican town committees on Monday, October 2nd. I will be debating **Jim St. George**; *Lexington activists, put it on your calendar!*

Governor Cellucci has challenged potential Democrat gubernatorial candidates to debate him on the issue. So far Senate President **Thomas Birmingham**, state Treasurer **Shannon O'Brien**, and **Steve Grossman** have accepted. Secretary of State **Bill Galvin** declined, quite properly since he is in charge of the election.

One of our key South Shore petition drive coordinators **Bill Kerrigan** sent us a note complaining that we gave him all the credit for the fall signatures collected from his area. He notes "the Herculean work of **Martin** and **Mary Ann Joyce** and **John Madfis**, the long committed hours put in by **Paul Cox**, and of course the major contribution of **Dick Bertocchi**."

A reminder to all coordinators: if you don't tell us, we don't know. We hope we didn't miss anyone who collected over 250 signatures last fall when we gave the governor our list for his celebration party in March. Since most petitions were taken directly to city/town halls during the spring drive, we may have missed someone when we invited our top spring petitioners to the "CLT compound" for a cookout. If anyone feels left out, please let us know; we still have leftover hamburgs and hot dogs. The leftover desserts, however, have mysteriously disappeared from my refrigerator.

By the way, coordinators do get a extra credit. If you've seen my bio for speaking engagements, it mentions my "4800 signatures collected on a state tax cap in 1977," my first volunteer effort. I hope nobody thinks I got them all by myself. But I can tell you without looking who all the Marblehead team members were twenty-three years ago, and some of them are still with us!

Sad news: New Bedford activist **Ann Perry** died suddenly in early August. She did the petition driving for Promise in southern Bristol County with her friend **Marion McMullen**. Our sympathy to her family and friends. And to all activists whose disability or illness may not be public knowledge: we are thinking of you and wishing you well.

Fifty CLT members who attended our annual dinner won signed copies of **Robert E. Kelly's** new book, *The National Debt*

from FDR (1941) to Clinton (1996), with its forward by **Jeff Jacoby**. In case you missed it, Jeff was suspended for four months without pay from the Boston Globe after writing a 4th of July column about the fate of the **Founding Fathers** without mentioning that the concept has been used elsewhere. (No kidding; guess the Globe doesn't read the same patriotic stuff that we do.) **Jack Thomas**, to whom many of us complained, wrote that the harsh punishment was deserved and when he gets back, Jacoby should be assigned to write about homeless shelters, alcoholics, unwed mothers, gay teenagers etc. because "it would make him a better columnist." Jack, your "impartial ombudsman" bias is showing.

Strange bedfellows. To those who think the coalition with which we fought taxpayer subsidies for the Red Sox was strange, wait til you see our coalition on legislative reform! More next issue.

Be careful what you ask for. Some members have complained that they never hear me on the radio anymore. Well, all you have to do is tune in to the new WMEX (1060 AM) every Thursday at noon for "Out to Lunch" with **Marjorie Claprood** and usually, me. Along with media guests like the Herald's **Cosmo Macero**, **Bradley J.** from WBCN, and **Seth Gitell** from the Boston Phoenix, we've had lunch with fashion designer **David Joseph**, two cast members from the new musical *Urban Cowboy*, and most recently, **Steve Grossman**, Democrat candidate for Governor, 2002. Hey, Guv, I got to debate him first!

Chip Ford and I occasionally guest with **Bob Katzen** and **Gene Burns** on 'MEX and **Jeanine Graf** on WTKK (96.9 FM). I also did some summer fill-in for **Margery Eagan** with **Jim Braude** on 'TKK. And I still write a weekly column for the Salem News and Lowell Sun.

Cultural section: Activist **Joan Paley** of Scituate gave the CLT staff a copy of her latest children's book, *Little White Duck* (remember the song by Burl Ives?). Her three books are available at bookstores and make a great gift for CLT members' babies and grandchildren.

Avi Nelson, who received CLT's 1999 *Warren Brookes Award*, has been a mentor for many of us since his talk radio show and Republican candidacy for U.S. Senate inspired us to get involved. Chip and I watch him represent our taxpayer viewpoint every Sunday morning at 11:30 on WCVB TV-5. Well, Avi has written a piano composition, *Ballade in C minor (Op.1) "Forgotten Dreams"* that was aired on Classical 102.5 FM in June. He has offered to send any CLT member who requests it the 8 minute CD or tape. Make your request to: Vertizon, PO Box 81, North Reading MA 01864. Include a check for \$5 for the tape or \$10 for the CD made out to Avi Nelson, and he will donate the money to our research arm, Citizens Economic Research Foundation (CERF).

Maybe we can talk him into writing *Opus 2*, "A Promise Kept" in November!



CLT Annual Dinner

Citizens for Limited Taxation held its 12th annual dinner on May 24th at Lombardo's in Randolph. Although we had fun putting on a "talent show" last year, this year we returned to the traditional format with a guest speaker. We invited Secretary of Administration & Finance Andrew Natsios, but a lot happened between his acceptance and the speech: Andrew was drafted as the new MassPike chairman and Big Dig czar after the resignation of Jim Kerasiotis.

CLT members who hadn't known him when, as a legislator, he helped draft Prop 2½, or as head of the Republican Party (and part of our Coalition for Legislative Reform), enjoyed meeting him and getting a taste of his sense of humor during his presentation.

Attendees also enjoyed meeting Dick Egan, who brought a tableful of friends and did say some very nice things about CLT after receiving his Warren T. Brookes Award.

This year's recipient of the *Citizen for Limited Taxation Award* was George Withington, featured in two newsletter photos. Our special guests were Robert Kelley and his lovely wife Peg; CLT's education arm, *Citizens Economic Research Foundation* (CERF), donated 50 of Bob's books on the national debt for a gift raffle.



Barbara presents CLT's prestigious *Warren T. Brookes Award* to **Dick Egan**, founder and chairman of EMC Corp., and a longtime CLT "John Hancock" and "Sam Adams" supporter.



At the annual CLT banquet in May, this year's *Citizen for Limited Taxation Award* was presented by CLT Associate Director Chip Faulkner to **George E. Withington** of Newton. George has been a CLT member and activist for over 20 years.



Former Cellucci administration Secretary of Administration & Finance and current MassPike/Big Dig "czar," **Andrew Natsios** -- a longtime CLT ally -- was our keynote speaker at the annual CLT banquet in May.

Canadians Have All the Fun

Resigned to a year of compassionate conservatism and gentle campaign themes about promises, we were reading the latest copy of *The Taxpayer*, the newsletter of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation (CTF). Our friends to the north, like us, were fighting taxpayer subsidies for a sport. But I'll let you read it yourself: "On January 20, 2000, the CTF announced the 'Great Canadian Puck-off' urging Canadians to send the Prime Minister a hockey

puck with a note stating that taxpayers don't wish to play the subsidy game. On the very next day, the federal minister responsible -- tail between his legs -- held a press conference to withdraw the package."

No, activists, we can't. A baseball doesn't fit in a regular envelope, and the "Great Massachusetts Balls-off" is a tad too threatening for today's climate. Aw gee...





Beacon Hill Happens

“Legislators will have August off, and all the rest of the year til the election. Those who have a challenger need the time to campaign, even if the challenger has to work full-time while he’s challenging, but hey, the incumbents make the rules.” *Barbara Anderson, the Salem Evening News, 6/00.*

Never mind: all things considered, we’d rather have them gone. Here are some of the things they did while they were around.

Good things

1. Legislators passed, and Governor Cellucci signed, the tax credit for charitable contributions. However, it’s still on the ballot as Question 7.

2. The cap on charter schools was raised, allowing more competition and choice. Legislators, unfortunately, couldn’t resist adding a provision that helps teacher unions organize the charter school teachers, but we hope the kinds of professionals who enjoy the enhanced creativity and independence of charter schools will resist.

3. The long over-due reform of special education was begun, changing the “maximum feasible benefit” standard to “appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment,” bringing Massachusetts in line with the rest of the country.

Bad things

1. The Teacher Retirement Bill will exacerbate the teacher shortage and allow some teachers to double-dip, as they are allowed to retire after 30 years at up to 80 percent pay, then return to the system after two years and collect their new pay and their pension.

2. The Legislature passed, and the Governor signed, a subsidy for new Fenway Park “infrastructure.” When there are inevitable cost overruns, we expect that taxpayers will be stuck with the bail-out. However, this is not a “done deal” yet: the new stadium requires stealing private property for the benefit of other private entities using Boston’s power of eminent domain; Boston City Council is presently balking at the land-taking. CLT is a member of Citizens Against Stadium Subsidies, along with MassPirg and Fenway Action.

3. After the deadline for filing nomination papers to run against them, legislators passed themselves a pay raise by doubling their unaudited expense budget to \$6000 a year, and doubling their per diem, giving them from \$1000 to \$9000 more depending on their distance from the State House. They say they need the extra cash to help them live with the restrictions of the voter-passed “Clean Elections” law. Then they put that law aside for future study. The pay raise, however, happens now. We’d share the roll call with you but despite the effort of Rep. Jim Marzilli (D-Arlington), there wasn’t one. By the way, next year their base pay increases again automatically because voters passed Question 1 in 1998; it was sold as a way to prevent legislators from hiking their own pay. CLT opposed it, warning that they would find other ways to get more money. Right again.

Didn’t Happen Yet things

1. A threatened filibuster stopped the primary enforcement seat belt law (*see “Frog Soup,” Page 2*).

2. The Governor vetoed taxpayer funded needles for drug addicts.

3. Although he supports the so-called Community Preservation Act with its Prop 2½-type override for buying open space and funding “affordable housing” and historic preservation, he vetoed the overly-increased fees.

4. The Governor vetoed \$3 million for teen job programs, on the grounds that it put the state in competition with the private sector for desperately needed employees.

Mayor Tom Menino was outraged, but a Cellucci spokesman’s responded that the city has \$220 million in unrestricted aid that it can use if it wants. According to the August 8th Boston Herald, Menino “pointed a finger back at the state coffers,

which he said were “over-flowing.” May we quote you, Mr. Mayor, in pursuit of our income tax rollback?

As for the Big Dig overruns and its no-show hacks: what better example of why we need to keep \$1.2 billion a year away from Beacon Hill and its Happenings?



Under the CLT Big Tent

Top CLT activists enjoy a summer cookout at the Marblehead “CLT Compound.” Foreground, left to right: Sarah Adams, Sarah Blood and George Withington; left table: Steve Epstein, Ted Tripp and Phil Bator.

“You don’t even ‘pay’ taxes. They ‘take’ taxes. You get your paycheck – they’re gone. That ain’t a payment, that’s a ‘jack.’ As in ‘hijack.’”

Conservative Black comedian Chris Rock
The Boston Sunday Globe, Aug. 6, 2000



A State Rep. Who Keeps His Promises!

Self-term limited representative serves his last term

Rep. Ron Gauch (R-Shrewsbury) has 98.4% CLT Taxpayer Rating



1993-1994: 100% (25 for 25)

1995-1996: 100% (20 for 20)

1997-1998: 95% (19 for 20)

1999-2000*

As a candidate, Ron Gauch took the “no new taxes” pledge and kept it. He has also consistently voted to “keep the promise” and roll back the income tax rate to 5 percent. As a legislator, he received national and even global attention with his discovery that the commonwealth was subsidizing fertility drugs for welfare mothers! He is credited with successfully leading the effort to end this practice.

Rep. Gauch championed a diesel fuel tax cut, gasoline tax freeze and legislation to limit the Attorney General’s regulatory power. A supporter of the Second Amendment, he fought for responsible firearms education and our right to defend ourselves.

Rep. Gauch is an outspoken opponent of Big Government and unafraid of powerful special interests.

He ran on a term limit pledge, and despite rising through the ranks to a minority leadership position, is keeping his word. We expect that he will continue to be a taxpayer activist.

** CLT Associate Director Chip Faulkner is presently working on the 1999-2000 CLT Rating. Results will be sent to CLT members before the election this fall.*

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**“YES!” on Question 4
Before They’re Back for MORE!**