



The Activist News

Citizens for Limited Taxation

The Commonwealth Activist Network

Post Office Box 408 □ Peabody, Massachusetts 01960

(508) 384-0100 □ E-Mail: cltg@cltg.org

World Wide Website: <http://cltg.org>



The Massachusetts Taxpayer Activist's Newsletter

December 1999

Tax Rollback Petition Drive Succeeds Magnificently

Not only did we succeed this time around, but we succeeded *magnificently!*

57,100 certified signatures were needed: we submitted over 122,000 – more than twice the requirement and enough to discourage any challenge of our petitions but the most frivolous. We may have had to learn the bitter lesson of overconfidence the hard way, but boy did we learn it well.

By the time we filed our petition language with the attorney general, the first week in August, already we had hundreds of CLT activists signed up with over 30,000 signatures pledged. When the petitions were available in mid-September, we hit the road running.

We can document almost 56,000 signatures collected by our members, but we'll never know the exact number because stacks of receipts (with no signature numbers) from city and town clerks piled up as activists mailed them to us for our drivers to pick-up.

But we had to deal with the new state Supreme Judicial Court ruling that forbid any "extraneous markings," like doodles, scribbles, or any marks

beyond a voter's signature. That means more signatures were disqualified than ever before.

We couldn't have achieved such an extraordinary result without the help of Governor Cellucci and the state Republican Party's Tax Rollback Committee, headed by Paul Melkonian. The Governor made sure we were insulated from challenge by also hiring a professional petition company; this added 47,000 signatures to our volunteer effort.

According to the State House News Service, Rick Arnold, the company's CEO, said: "The odds against someone doing this are so tremendous. We're helping them get over the first huge immediate

hurdle. This year's income tax cut required less handholding because CLT runs a sophisticated volunteer operation."

Our special thanks go to the top CLT signature collectors: **Bob Casimiro (2,718), Marsha Ciccolo, Len Mead, George Withington, Sarah Adams** and the rest of the **Newton Taxpayers Association, Mark Ferguson, Norm and Joan Paley, Steve Olson, Sheila Richardson, Bill Kerrigan, Pat Warnock, John and Sandy MacMillan, Mary Young, Kristine Kissel-Weir, Frank Tobin, and Phil and Mary Bator**, whose combined effort accounted for over 30,000

signatures. CLT associate director **Chip Faulkner** alone collected over 2,000 signatures.

By the end of the drive, we had 900 volunteers on the streets getting signatures. Our thanks to each and every one of you. Every petition you filled boosted this effort – the most signatures collected for any petition this year – and insured our success.

The response to our mailing of a petition to every member was great! Those signatures accounted for almost 4,000 additional signatures; even though it's long past the deadline, they're still coming in. For those of you who waited too late to mail your petition back to us – *and there*

were hundreds of signatures that arrived too late to qualify – you'll have another chance to sign in the spring. Please don't put it off next time until it's too late for your signature to count.

Thanks to all you members who wouldn't quit despite the 1997 setback. Losing to the teachers union by 26 signatures the last time out was heartbreaking, but our rebound proves the old adage, "That which does not kill you, makes you stronger."

We'll see you all back out there in the spring. After this demonstration, collecting those additional 9,517 signatures to put our question on the 2000 ballot should be like rolling off a log!

– CHIP FORD



The Chipster's Christmas Carol

By Chip Faulkner
(Sing to the tune of White Christmas)



I'm dreaming of a lighter tax bill
Just like the one I used to know
Where our paychecks glisten
And politicians listen
To voters demanding the rate be low
I'm dreaming of a lighter tax bill
With every tax bill check I write
May the taxpayers be merry and bright
When they win the tax cut ballot fight.

The Outsiders' Track

by Barbara Anderson

On Thanksgiving Day, we gave thanks for CLT members and activists; **Governor Cellucci** and our Republican allies, especially their petition drive director **Paul Melkonian**; and the small minority of legislators who voted to rollback the income tax rate this year: all House and Senate Republicans; House Democrats **Atsalis, Dempsey, Finegold, Fresolo, Hynes** and **Travis**; Senate Democrats **Glodis** and **Tucker**; Independent **Gately**, recently elected mayor of Waltham.

Special thanks to those volunteers who answered our call for assistance in counting the signatures at the Marriot on November 30th: **Sarah** and **Roger Blood**, **Marcia Ciccola**, **Steve Epstein**, **Woody Ford**, **Dominick Ianno**, **John Madfis**, **Len Mead**, **Chris Mirarchi**, **Rick Morrissey**, **Norm** and **Joan Paley**, **Bill Rivers**, **Chris Tavares**, and **Natalie Wong-Brink**.

Along with the top petitioners listed on page one, special mention to those who collected over 400 signatures: **Chris Fava**, **Martin** and **MaryAnn Joyce**, **Michael Cahill**, **Richard Knight**, **Tony Duskey**, **Bill Monnie**, **Jerzy Jachimczyk**, **Pauline Lionett**, and **Jane Pray**. And to all those who identified themselves as senior citizens and announced they are "getting a little old for this," but sent in signatures anyway – including the 94 year-old former teacher. Take *that*, MTA!

If we are overlooking anyone, please let us know. Be aware that we could only keep computer records of those who filled out a volunteer card in August and were in the database, and who followed directions to send an identification form in with their filled petition sheets.

Also, anyone have any good petitioning stories for the next *Activist News*? For instance, **Chip Faulkner** was petitioning in front of a Star Market and got a refusal from a woman whose child climbed up on a pay-for-ride pony. As she searched for the coin, Chipster popped a quarter in the machine, and as the strains of "pop goes the weasel"

filled the air, the lady signed!

John Braithwaite, thanks for the clipping service!

And speaking of service, you won't hear this fiscal conservative complaining about the U.S. Post Office. We took the petition packets, addressed to the volunteer petitioners, to the Marblehead branch at 4:00 PM, and one of the volunteers called the next afternoon to say he'd already filled a sheet! And thank you, Marblehead volunteers who helped in the office: **Jean Eldridge**, **Ben Gatchell**, **Joyce Lofmark**, **Larry Pierce**, **Wilfred Rokowski**, **Martha Stiles**, and **Pat Warnock**.

For service above and beyond: **Dick Egan**, who not only contributed generously to both CLT and the Governor's committee, but collected signatures himself. We were stunned by dozens and dozens of e-mail messages from EMC Corporation employees requesting petitions. Also, **Pete Peters**, founder of the Pioneer Institute, and his wife **Ruth** personally collected signatures for the rollback.

Despite the demands of the petition drive, CLT found time to object when House Ways & Means Chairman **Paul Haley** tried to 1) increase registry fees and 2) raise legislators' compensation as part of a constitutional officers' pay hike. He was forced to back down on both bright ideas. We also supported Governor Cellucci's vetoes of a capital gains tax hike, additional "education" spending beyond his originally proposed 8%, and a teachers' union pension scheme. Only the "education" spending veto was overridden.

Some observers were surprised when CLT argued against a House-initiated change in the "*Clean Election Law*" that was passed by voters in 1998. Although we are opposed to public funding of elections, we know we must be consistent in our support for the initiative petition process and the will of the voters if we want Prop 2½ and our other ballot victories to stand.

