

To the Honorable Representatives of the House Municipal Government and Housing Committee,

I attended the hearing for House Bill #6162 on Tuesday. I signed up early to testify AGAINST the bill; however, after three hours, I had to leave to care for my elderly mother. Below please read my testimony that includes some comments on your comments during the hearing:

I sympathize with the difficult position the Mayor and City Council are in and as they suggested, I am taking part at the city level by attending the City Council Finance Committee, the Ward 13 meeting with Council President Miller and the Mayor and I have had email and one on one conversations with her with alternative suggestions as well as with other council people. I will continue to do so.

But I am here before you to ask you to consider your role and the effect your decision will have on low and moderate income Providence residents.

--As an example, as I waited to testify, I heard the Representative from Warren say that last year this committee granted Warren and New Shoreham permission to lift their caps; Block Island by 14%! That decision has had a difficult financial impact on the working people of Block Island who have lived in their homes for decades and now find it difficult to afford their homes. I know because my brother is one of those people. Just a few minutes ago you heard a bill that attempts to ameliorate the unaffordable situation for working Block Islanders. That tax levy increase helped make it worse! Please don't do that to Providence.

You've heard from Mayor Smiley & Councilwomen Ryan and Peterson representing the Providence City Council.

I'd like to speak to you as a 30+ year tax paying, voting city homeowner of a two-family home.

One unit for me & my husband, one unit for my 83 yr old fixed-income mother.

I have also spoken with many other neighbors of multi-family homes in my neighborhood who share my concern AND we are far from the most vulnerable.

I believe in and am proud to pay taxes. (public schools, infrastructure , parks, libraries, city services, even jobs for my neighbors).

However, YOU put a 4% cap on the levy in place for a reason. As a tax paying, voting Rler, I ask you to uphold and honor your regulation.

- RI has among the highest rents in the country.

- One in 4 homes are being bought by out-of-staters.

- Inflation, assessed values (mine increased by 40%), insurance, lead laws, all make paying the mortgage & daily expenses more of a challenge, especially when trying not to raise rent on our tenant/s.

- Should YOU approve this increase, my taxes will go up 9.6%

The Mayor's argument is that this is a one-time emergency due to losing the school funding lawsuit

Here's the thing, these days, there is always an emergency (COVID, now, next year federal funding). It won't stop, unless you stop it.

I'd love for the state to give more funds to its capital city (PLEASE consider it)

And/or the city needs to balance the budget without raising the 4% cap (the City Council says it is working hard for other solutions, it can be done and it will be done if you don't raise the cap).

There are creative alternatives to raising taxes such as allowing full-roof solar on all city buildings and parking lots which would generate millions of dollars in income.

PLEASE stand by your regulation. We, the people of Providence, want to pay our taxes, but it needs to be a fair share and it is not.

Thank you for your service and for the consideration of the people you represent,

Kari Lang

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