

RE. HOUSE BILL NO. 6162 ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO TAXATION -- LEVY AND ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL TAXES

Dear Members of the House Municipal Government and Housing Committee:

I would like to express my distaste for House Bill No. 6162 and urge you to REJECT it.

Mayor Smiley is a smooth political operator of many years standing, and has misrepresented and omitted key aspects his current property tax agenda right up to and including his appearance before your committee meeting on 4/22/2025.

Speaking in front of you, he continually tried to pass off his bill as a “7.5% tax levy” that he would be seeking. To the average person that means, “OK. My taxes will go up by 7.5%.” It required a deconstruction by committee member, House Rep. David Morales to expose the devil in the details.

The Mayor proposes to gain his 7.5% levy by, in part, inflicting a whopping 16% tax increase on owner-occupied homes with two to five families. The average value of these properties increased 47% to \$585,027. By contrast, the proposed tax increase for building with six to 10 units is 5%. And how about this: -1% for buildings with 11 or more units, and -2% for commercial properties. 4% for single family homes.

I own, and reside in, a two-family on the West Side of Providence. The mayor wants to raise my property taxes by 16%. Although many decry what they view as high rent costs in Providence, this tax hike will make it worse, as I and the others my situation Will pass along some portion of a tax hike.

I did not create the unfunded public-school debt levied against the city, nor did I have any say it how the city handled it, including a zero contingency in the event that they lost their suit, unless they cynically assumed they would just push it off on property owners, as they have. Let those who mishandled the \$25,000,000 shortfall pay it. Let the mayor open a Go Fund Me page for the city. Let the rich who pad Brown University’s endowment make a contribution instead to the city. There are doubtless other creative ways to deal with this problem without punishing me.

And, on top of this beating, owner-occupants of three or less units, having been exempt for years, must now comply with a draconian lead abatement law costing homeowners thousands.

My property assessment suddenly ratcheted up by 47% this year, which would automatically produce a healthy tax increase even at the current 4% tax rate, never mind the mayor’s requested 16%. But to ruthlessly gouge us, just as, say, an airline might during the height of travel season, is unfair. And shouldn’t managing a city be about fairness?

Sincerely,
Charles Pinning
Providence