

Correspondence received by the Concord Select Board  
Week Ending – October 28, 2024

1. Michael Phillips 176 Partridge Lane
2. Jennie Garofalo 51 Coolidge Road
3. Rob Whitmore 306 Musketaquid Road

Dear Members of the Concord Select Board,

I am writing to request that you please consider discontinuing the use of the Residential Tax Exemption in Concord. I feel using that regulation in a town like Concord, where most real estate is primarily residential and where most properties serve as the owner's primary residence, is simply a misapplication of what it was intended to accomplish. As a result, in a town like ours, its application is both divisive and simply unfair.

I recognize that in the face of ever-increasing costs, we need to continue to focus on making Concord affordable for as many people as possible. However, I think this needs to be addressed via the more traditional methods of controlling spending and looking for alternative sources of revenue. Town spending has ramped significantly over the past few years (I believe that is correlated to how Town Meeting functions but that is a different topic). That spending ramp was approved by the town as a whole (including the Middle School and numerous other initiatives). In fact, as a consistent Town Meeting attendee, I know that many of the people that were passionate about approving many of these projects/spending are also the same people that are regularly concerned about the affordability of Concord - seeming to not appreciate the link between the two. We have a real fiscal challenge in Concord. Attempting to band aid the issue for some with the RTE is not productive in addressing it and provides a counter incentive to addressing spending.

I strongly feel that the RTE, when used in a town like Concord, is simply re-distributionism. While it is absolutely appropriate to have government funded programs to help those in need, this is as close as I have ever seen in the United States to directly taking money from those perceived to have more (live in higher assessed homes) and giving to those perceived to have less (live in lower assessed homes). As has been pointed out many times, it is far from a perfect tool even to accomplish that as there is not guarantee that those who live in higher assessed homes or who own income properties are truly better off than those receiving the money that live in lower assessed homes. Is it surprising that taking money from some citizens and handing it to others has proved divisive? As I said at the start of this note, it is simply unfair for the Select Board to attempt to play Robin Hood in our town. I truly hope that you will reconsider your position, and as a town, we can work toward other ways to make Concord more affordable for all.

Thank you for your consideration and all of your hard work.

Regards,

Michael Phillips

176 Partridge Lane

Dear Members of the Town of Concord Select Board,

I am writing to request that the Select Board roll back its decision to implement the RTE. This action by the Select Board lacked research, prudence, and good judgment, and resulted in a significant tax impact without the input or vote from the citizens of Concord. Frankly, the Select Board has opened itself to accusation of dereliction of duty when just five people made such a major and consequential decision without the full consideration and consultation of its entire electorate. The implementation of RTE has caused material hardship for many townspeople by shifting the tax burden solely based on the misguided and inaccurate assumption by the Select Board that a house with a higher assessed value equals excess disposable income that can be used to subsidize other citizens in town. The RTE has real world negative impacts on my family and many others, and furthermore creates two classes of town citizens instead of one coordinated and cohesive community. You have a responsibility to your constituents -- ALL tax-paying constituents -- to hit pause on this initiative, conduct an extensive and thoughtful study on the pros and cons of implementing the RTE in Concord, and call for a vote from ALL tax-paying constituents, not just your contemporaries and beneficiaries of this tax break. The Select Board's poorly thought-out action to implement the RTE will undoubtedly cause animosity and rifts in our town, impact charitable giving, force current members of the community to leave this town, and make Concord unattractive to future newcomers. I urge the Select Board to take stock, do some critical thinking, and roll back this regressive tax and instead focus on revenue growth opportunities that benefit all members of our community.

Thank you,

Jennie Garofalo

51 Coolidge Road

Hi,

I am writing to express my opposition to the RTE. I spoke during the public session of a town meeting several months ago. If the town needs additional funds, then taxes should go up for all constituents. Obviously, those with more expensive homes will pay a higher amount based upon property size and home value. It is not fair to place this burden only on higher value homes, while others in the community actually pay less in taxes, including some on the select board.

These policies will have widespread effects. It is likely that those people who have felt the effect of higher taxes may contribute less to philanthropic causes around Concord, may invest less in capital improvements in their homes, and may decide to move out of Concord in the future.

Thank you.

Rob Whitmore

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