

Brookline PAX: Just say NO-NO-NO!

Brookline PAX urges a NO vote on all three ballot questions.

Question 1 – Last year Massachusetts joined the great majority of states that *don't* exempt liquor from their sales tax. Question 1 would put the state back among the small minority that *do*. The revenue provides treatment centers for alcoholism and drug addiction that serve more than 100,000 people.

This tax has had little effect on alcohol sales; state figures show a 1% decline in the tax's first year (which may be from the recession) and a 4% increase for the last quarter. Exemptions to our sales tax should continue to be limited to basic life necessities: food, most clothing, and prescription drugs. Vote NO.

Question 2 attempts to repeal the state's affordable housing law, Chapter 40B. Local zoning codes commonly pose substantial hurdles to the construction of modestly priced homes. For example, in eastern Massachusetts more than an acre of land is required, on average, for every new housing unit. 40B enables developers to trump zoning ordinances by making at least 20% of the units in a mixed-income project affordable to buyers making 80% or less of the state's median income. The goal of 40B is hardly utopian; communities become exempt from 40B developments when 10% of their housing units are affordable to income-qualified buyers.

Though we'd like some refinements to spread developments across ALL of Brookline, 40B has been a great success statewide, producing 58,000 homes in multi-family developments. Construction permits will be withdrawn for 12,000 more if the repeal succeeds. More than 1,000 business, religious, civic, and environmental organizations urge a NO vote.

Question 3 would cut the state sales tax from 6.25% to 3%. Even without this cut, next year's state budget faces a major projected shortfall of \$2.0 billion (7.1%). Question 3 would increase the shortfall to 16% of the budget – and 28% of discretionary spending! It would truly be a catastrophe for not just all state services, but also local aid, i.e. our schools, police and fire protection, parks, roads, libraries, youth programs and services for seniors. Vote NO.

Frank Farlow & Marty Rosenthal
Co-chairs, Brookline PAX

(Farlow: 617-232-9654)