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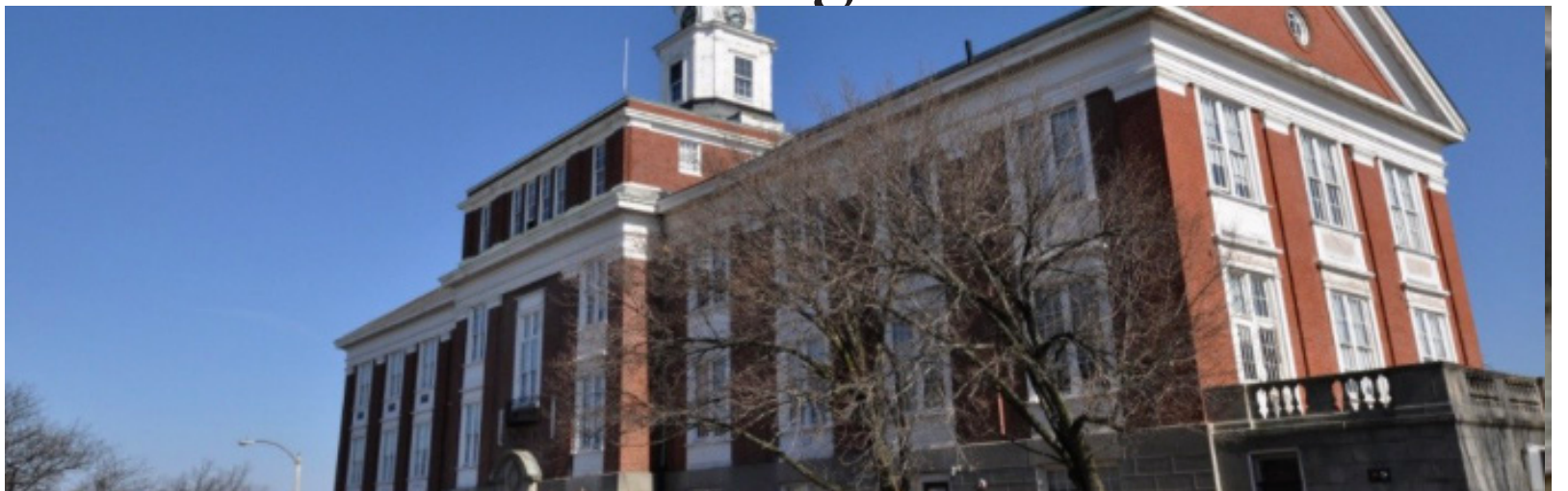
SOMERVILLE/MEDFORD MASS.

Tuesday June 10th, 2025

Massachusetts Sanctuary Cities Ask Federal Court To Block Trump Administration From De-Funding Them



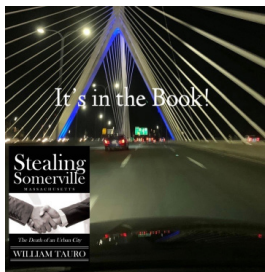
NEWS TALK OUT LOUD/SPEAK UP



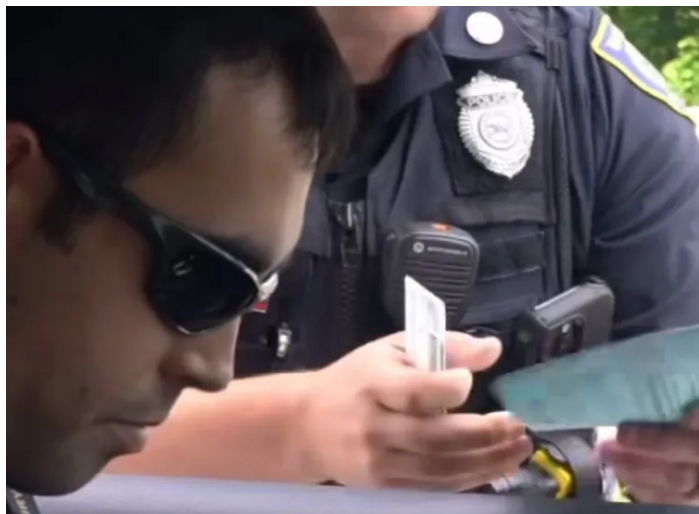
Continued to page 11



Somerville Police Real Life Somerville Police Stories Page



Blue Envelope Program: Bridging the Gap Between Police and Drivers on the Autism Spectrum



Continued to page 15

CAP HOSPITAL PROFITS AND SALARY OF HOSPITAL CEOS



Continued to page 13



MOUNT VERNON RESTAURANT

We are open for indoor dining along with take out. Our business hours are Sunday through Wednesday 11:30am to 8:30pm and Thursday through Saturday 11:30am to 9:30pm. Our full menu along with our daily specials and catering menu is available. Join us inside to cheer on your favorite sports teams!



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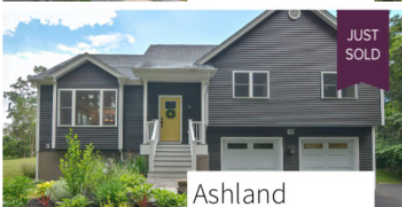
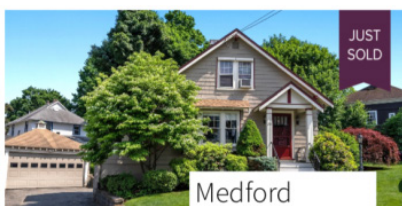
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We have been busy, but never too busy for you! These four properties were sold in one month! If you see something you would like to know more about, have any questions or are thinking about buying or selling a property, please don't hesitate to send us an email or give us call!

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Somerville/Medford Remembering Emile MontLouis



Obituary

Emile MontLouis – Of Cambridge, passed away peacefully after a brief illness with his fam-

ily by his side on Saturday, May 31, 2025. He was 81 years old.

Born in Anse D'Hainault, Haiti, Emile was the beloved son of the late Paulinice and Alce-nise (Dorlus) MontLouis. A devoted family man and pillar of strength, Emile dedicated his life to providing for his loved ones. He worked tirelessly, often holding multiple jobs, to ensure his family had every opportunity for a better life. Through his actions, he instilled in those around him a deep respect for perseverance, integrity, and the value of hard work.

Despite his industrious nature, Emile found joy in life's simpler pleasures. He cherished long walks through Cambridge, quiet conversations with loved ones, and a good game of cards; especially solitaire. A passionate sports fan, he never missed a soccer match or a boxing bout, moments during which he was truly in his element. Emile's unwavering love, strong moral compass, and gentle spirit will be remembered and missed deeply by all who had the honor of knowing him.

Beloved husband of 49 years to Marie Jeanine (Calizaire) Mont-

Louis. Devoted father of Eme-lide MontLouis, Dianna Lysius and Chantal MontLouis Leach-man and her husband Courtney Anthony. Cherished grandfa-ther of Amarri DJ Clemons. Loving and dear best friend and brother to Macedoine Mont-Louis and his wife Antonine and the late Paul MontLouis, Henriette MontLouis and Jean Justin MontLouis. Also lovingly survived by many loving nieces, nephews, friends and extended family members.

Calling Hours will be held in the George L. Doherty Funeral Home on Friday, June 13th

from 4:00PM to 7:00PM.

A funeral mass will be held on Saturday, June 14th in St. John the Evangelist Church 2254 Massachusetts Ave at 10:00AM. Visitors may visit with the fam-ily one hour prior to mass from 9:00AM to 10:00AM.

Services will conclude with interment.

Somerville/Medford Remembering James L. Burns



Obituary

James L. Burns of Belmont passed away on June 7, 2025 he was 78. Born in

Boston and raised in East Somerville; where he lived much of his life, James was the son of the late Imelda E. (McKinnon) and Maurice J. Burns.

He was a member of the first graduating class of Arlington Catholic High School and served honor-ably in the US Army when drafted during the Vietnam War. He was then ap-pointed to the Somerville Fire Department and began his 37-year career in May of 1973 and was primarily

assigned to Fire Headquar-ters on Ladder 2, retiring in September of 2010. An avid sports fan, James enjoyed football, playing for the Charlestown Townies and following the Patriots, cel-ebrating his favorite holiday – Super Bowl Sunday and tried his luck on an occa-sional horse race. Beyond his family, he also cherished time spent with his loyal dog, Bentley J. Burns.

The beloved husband of the late Susan (Johnson) Burns, he was the devoted father

of Melissa Burns and her husband Sean Gray, James L. Burns, Jr. all of Belmont, Michelle Burns-Rubin and her husband Zach of Watertown and the late Paul J. Burns. Cherished Papa of Shauna and Sean Gray. Brother of John Burns and his wife Suzette of Virginia. Dear friend of Bob Lyons of Somerville.

Funeral Procession from the George L. Doherty Funeral Home, 855 Broad-way (Powder House Sq.) Somerville on Friday, June

13th at 9:00AM followed by a Funeral Mass celebrated in St. Benedict Church, Somerville at 10:00AM. Relatives and friends invited to attend. Visiting Hours in the funeral home Thursday 4:00PM to 7:00PM. Services will conclude with burial at St. Paul Cemetery, Arling- ton. In lieu of flowers, dona- tions in James' name can be made to the Somerville Fire, Local 76 Scholarship Fund, 266 Broadway, Somerville, MA 02145.

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Somerville/Medford Remembering Theresa (Terri) Medeiros



Obituary

Theresa (Terri) Medeiros, born on February 22, 1962, in Somerville, was a beloved daughter, sister, mother, aunt, and grand-mother. She was the cher-ished daughter of the late Robert and Elizabeth Medeiros. Terri was a loving sister to Robert Medeiros of Houston, TX, and the

late William, Susan, and Daniel Medeiros.

She was a devoted mother to Christopher and his wife Christine of Salem, NH, Kendra Wagoner of Denver, CO, and her be-loved niece, Briana Gran-doit, whom she proudly raised as her own. Terri's love extended to her grandchildren, Maya, Lily,

Tiana, Troy, and Brynnly, who were the light of her life.

For nearly three decades, Terri served with unwav-ering dedication as a 911 dispatcher for the Som-erville Police Department, providing a vital service to her community. Her compassion, patience, and quick thinking were quali-

ties that defined her work and earned her the respect and admiration of all who knew her.

In the weeks leading up to her passing, Terri was surrounded by her family and friends, who offered her love and comfort dur-ing this difficult time. To honor Terri's wishes, there will be no services.

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Drag Shows, Children, and Taxpayer Dollars: A Growing Controversy



By William Tauro

Drag shows, where performers—often men—adopt exaggerated gender personas, are a polarizing form of entertainment. Personally, I don't find them appealing, nor do I approve, but I firmly believe in individual freedom. Adults should have the right to enjoy or perform in drag

shows, just as others have the right to opt out. To each their own—live and let live. However, the conversation shifts when young children are brought into the equation, and it becomes even more contentious when taxpayer dollars are used to fund these events without public consent.

The inclusion of children at drag

shows, such as “drag queen story hours” or family-friendly performances, has sparked heated debate. For many, including myself, exposing young kids to adult-oriented performances feels inappropriate. These events often touch on complex themes of gender and sexuality, which can be confusing for children who lack the maturity to process them. It's not about denying anyone's identity or expression—it's about protecting the innocence of childhood and respecting parents' rights to guide their kids' exposure to such topics.

Proponents argue these events are harmless, fostering inclusivity and teaching kids to embrace diversity. They emphasize that drag can be theatrical, not inherently sexual, and can be adapted for younger audiences. But even if the intent is positive, many parents see it as an

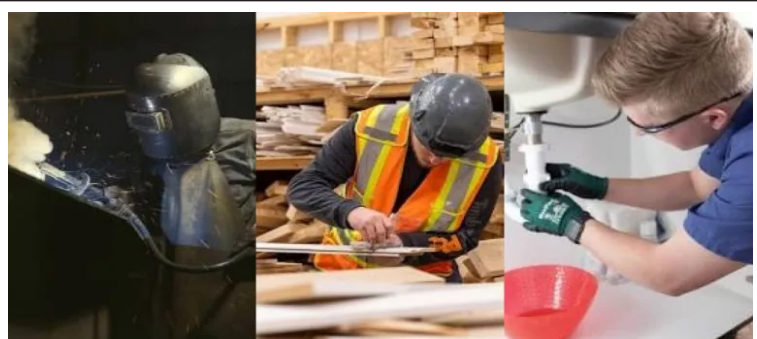
overreach, feeling that adult entertainment is being pushed into spaces meant for children. The discomfort isn't rooted in prejudice but in a belief that kids shouldn't be pawns in cultural debates.

Adding fuel to the fire is the involvement of municipalities using taxpayer money to fund drag events without voter approval. When public funds are spent on controversial performances—especially those involving children—it raises questions about accountability. Taxpayers deserve a say in how their money is used, particularly on divisive issues. If a community supports such events, they should be put to a vote, ensuring transparency and democratic input. Bypassing this process risks alienating residents and eroding trust in local governance.

The solution is simple: respect indi-

vidual freedoms while prioritizing age-appropriate settings for children and fiscal responsibility. Adults should be free to enjoy drag shows, but events targeting kids need careful consideration to avoid crossing boundaries. Likewise, municipalities must involve the public before spending taxpayer dollars on polarizing events. It's about finding a balance—respecting personal choices while safeguarding childhood and public trust.

Gen Z's Trade School Revolution: Redefining the American Dream



By William Tauro

Across the United States, Generation Z is quietly rewriting the script on what it means to succeed. Where once a four-year college degree was the golden ticket, a growing wave of young adults is choosing trade schools, drawn by a blend of pragmatism, passion, and a rejection of the one-size-fits-all path to prosperity.

The numbers tell a compelling

story. Enrollment in vocational programs has surged, with a 16% increase in trade school attendance from 2018 to 2023, according to the National Student Clearinghouse. Meanwhile, four-year college enrollment has dipped by nearly 8% in the same period. Why the shift? For Gen Z, it's about sidestepping the pitfalls of crushing student debt—now averaging \$43,000 for college graduates—and embracing careers that offer

immediate impact. Trade programs, often completed in under two years for \$10,000 or less, provide a stark contrast to the \$100,000-plus price tag of many bachelor's degrees.

But it's not just about money. Gen Z is drawn to the tactile satisfaction of trades like carpentry, plumbing, or solar panel installation. On platforms like X, young tradespeople share stories of building homes or wiring smart grids, celebrating the pride of creating something tangible. “I'm 22, debt-free, and making \$60k fixing wind turbines,” one X user posted, sparking thousands of likes. This resonates with a generation that values authenticity and impact over desk jobs and diplomas.

The job market backs their choice. The U.S. Department of Labor projects a 12% growth in construction trades and 15% in healthcare technician roles by 2032, far outpacing many white-collar fields. Median earnings for electricians (\$62,000) and welders (\$48,000) rival or exceed those of some college-educated professions, without the looming specter of loan repayments.

Yet, this pivot isn't without pushback. Trades still battle a lingering stigma as “blue-collar” or less prestigious, a narrative Gen Z is dismantling with every viral video of a perfectly welded seam or a masterfully installed HVAC system. Quality concerns also

persist—some trade schools, particularly for-profits, face criticism for inconsistent training standards. Still, reputable programs like those at Apex Technical School boast 85% job placement rates, proving their worth.

For Gen Z, choosing trade school isn't just practical—it's a rebellion against a system that overpromised and underdelivered. They're not just learning skills; they're building futures on their own terms, one blueprint at a time. As this trend grows, it's clear: the trades aren't a detour from the American Dream—they're a new road to it.

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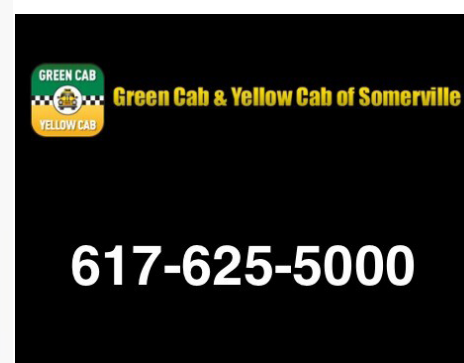
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Kiwanis Club of Somerville News Updates



SOMERVILLE_ On Thursday, June 5th, one of our most gratifying meetings of our year was held at the Burren Restaurant and Pub in Davis Square. Our annual scholarship awards meeting was held to celebrate and award twelve amazing Somerville High School graduates with a \$1000 scholarship each. Eleven of the twelve graduates were able to join us for

today's meeting.

The scholarships were awarded to:

1. The Gerry Donahoe Memorial Scholarship was presented to Jaylee Whalen.
2. The Paul O. Kelly Memorial Scholarship was presented to Ambika Bhargava.
3. The Larry Post Memorial Scholarship was presented

to Kerby Luxama.

4. The Pauline D'Aurora Memorial Scholarship was presented to Francisco Santos Landaverde.
5. Giselle Altamiranda
6. Thiago Betti
7. Maria Costa
8. Elle Gys
9. Mashruf Mahin
10. Manjot Singh
11. Kaylie Wen
12. (Unable to attend)

These amazing graduates will be attending colleges and universities near and far including Harvard University, Boston College, Northeastern University, University of Southern California, University of Massachusetts / Amherst, Fitchburg State University, Salem State University and Bunker Hill Community College among others. Somerville Police Chief Shumeane Benford also attended and addressed the recipients.

These scholarships are made possible each year by the generous support of our members and friends through our Lucky K program chaired by past

president Charlie Ball and grants from the Somerville Kiwanis Scholarship Foundation. President Tom Austin and Co-President Dawn Austin thanked the committee for their diligent work selecting these twelve recipients from among fifty-one applicant essays. The committee, chaired by Past President Tony Ciccariello, included Distinguished Past President David O'Brien, Past President Isaac Machado and Past President Charlie Ball. To learn more about the Kiwanis Club of Somerville, visit our web page, <http://www.somervillekiwanis.org> or like our Facebook Page Kiwanis Club of Somerville

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Congratulations to The Medford VFW on its new Installation of Commander Steve McLaughlin as he takes charge.

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State of A Tavola:

A Tavola's outdoor patio dining is open for business! Take-out and delivery is also available! (with-in a small radius of A Tavola).

A special menu and special hours will be posted on our website as well as our social media channels. Please stay tuned

for any and all details.

As always our gift cards will be available through our website, over the phone and in person. Starting Tuesday, for every gift card purchase over \$100, we will add an additional \$20 gift card as a way to thank you for your support.

If there is anything in particular you would like to see from us or if you need help preparing food at home for your families please reach out and we will do

our best to help. Whether it be recipe ideas with random things you might have purchased or if you run out of something that you need that we can help with please don't hesitate to ask.

A Tavola Restaurant Winchester outdoor patio dining is open for business & takeout orders: (781)729-1040 34 Church St Winchester

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Missing In Action Somerville Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. Killed During World War II 80 Years Ago Being buried in Everett On Saturday

United States Army Air Forces Staff Sgt. Loring E. Lord, who was killed during World War II and was reported Missing in Action (MIA) for almost 80 years, is finally coming home. Sgt. Lord was part of the crew of an A-26B Invader that was shot down during a mission over Germany on March 21, 1945. The remains of the crew were never recovered.

Now, through the diligence and hard work of so many people, including many of his family members and the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), his remains have been found and are being re-

turned to his home state to be interred with his parents and sister at Woodlawn Cemetery. We are honored to be able to assist and participate in this amazing homecoming.

The public is invited to attend the interment ceremony that will take place on Saturday, June 7, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. at Woodlawn Cemetery (302 Elm Street, Everett, MA 02149) to welcome an American hero back home.

The public is also invited to stand along the procession route to show support and welcome home a soldier who made the ultimate

sacrifice in service to our country. The procession route will enter Everett from Sweetser Circle and move along Broadway to Ferry Street, then Ferry Street to Elm Street, and finally Elm Street to Woodlawn Cemetery.

If you'd like to learn more about Staff Sgt. Lord's story, please visit: <http://www.dpaa.mil/News-Stories/ID-Announcements/Article/4027192/airman-accounted-for-from-wwii-lord-1>



This Week's Quotable Quotes

By Bob Katzen

“Office to housing conversions are transformative for our main streets and downtowns. Building new housing from vacant buildings is a long-term investment in the community, providing more living options for residents, a renewed tax base and more customers for local businesses.”
—Lt. Gov. Kim Driscoll on the Healey Administration awarding \$7.4 million in for two office to housing conversion projects that will create nearly 200 new units in downtown Boston.

“This program was inspired by my own journey as a public safety intern nearly three decades ago. Our goal is to give students the tools, relationships and real-world insight that can spark a lifelong career in public service. The passion and diversity this cohort brings makes me optimistic for the future of public safety in Massachusetts.”
—Public Safety and Security Secretary Terrence Reidy on the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security's Internship Program which continues to serve as a pipeline for talented, mission-driven

individuals interested in careers in public safety and government service.

“This program is a great example of government being innovative and supporting people's financial and career goals based on their needs and unique circumstances.”
—Sen. Sal DiDomenico (D-Everett) on the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities awarding more than \$1 million to local housing authorities and regional administering agencies this month to promote economic opportunity for public housing residents.

“The data are clear. Lead was detected in most of the taps tested at schools and childcare centers across the state and we know children are the most impacted from exposure to lead. We need policies that get the lead out of faucets and fountains in our schools and childcare centers.”
—Deirdre Cummings, MASSPIRG legislative director, urging state lawmakers to pass a bill to get the lead out of drinking water at Massachusetts schools and childcare centers.



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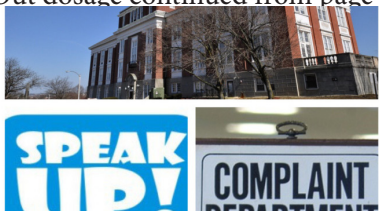
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Here's your weekly News Talk Shout Out dosage continued from page 2



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Somerville's Nicotine-Free Generation Policy Begins as New Sales Regulations In Effect



SOMERVILLE – This spring, Somerville's Board of Health (BOH) voted for the City to join a growing

national movement to create a Nicotine-Free generation by adopting new public health regulations limiting the sale of nicotine products, which went into effect May 1.

The updated rules, adopted unanimously by the Somerville Board of Health on March 25, mark the start of a major local effort to prevent nicotine addiction, especially among youth.

Under the new regulations:

Somerville will begin implement-

ing a Nicotine-Free Generation policy. Anyone born on or after January 1, 2005, will be permanently ineligible to purchase tobacco or nicotine products in the city, even once they turn 21.

Nicotine pouches can now only be sold in adult-only retail stores. Retailers who do not meet this standard must remove pouches from their shelves immediately.

"The Nicotine-Free Generation policy isn't about taking away

rights, it's about giving young people the freedom to grow up without the grip of nicotine," said Bhavika Kalia, a member of Somerville Positive Forces. "It's about bold action today to protect the well-being of those who will lead our communities tomorrow."

The Somerville Board of Health encourages retailers and community members to familiarize themselves with the new rules. These changes reflect the City's continued commitment to a healthier, addiction-

free future for its residents. These regulations follow years of local and statewide efforts to reduce access to harmful products, including Massachusetts' 2024 ban on menthol-mimicking tobacco products.

For more information, contact Six City Tobacco Control Director Bonny Carroll at bcarroll@somervillema.gov, or visit somervillema.gov/prevention.



Massachusetts Sanctuary Cities Ask Federal Court To Block Trump Administration From De-Funding Them



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LAWYERS FOR CIVIL RIGHTS BOSTON



BOSTON—Two sanctuary cities in Massachusetts—Somerville and Chelsea—today asked a federal court to block the Trump Administration’s attempts to strip them of federal funding because they refuse to be coerced into participating in the Administration’s mass deportation efforts. The

Cities’ preliminary injunction motion follows closely on the heels of a formal notice issued late last week by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), designating both Cities as jurisdictions that must change their policies “immediately” or face consequences.

Represented by Lawyers for Civil Rights, the Cities filed their lawsuit in February 2025, asserting that the Administration’s heavy-handed tactics—threatening to “de-fund” and prosecute them for failing to bend to the President’s will—violate their Constitutional rights. Today’s motion asks the court to enjoin any such attempts while the lawsuit proceeds. Somerville and Chelsea have identified as welcoming/sanctuary cities since 1987 and 2007, respectively, recognizing that victims and witnesses are less likely to report crimes if they know that local police are working in concert with federal immigration authorities. By avoiding that

entanglement, sanctuary cities improve public safety and quality of life not just for immigrant residents, but for all residents and community members. Since his inauguration, President Trump has issued a series of Executive Orders (here, here, and here) threatening to cut off federal funds to sanctuary cities; the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) has warned of criminal and civil prosecutions against them while purporting to freeze all DOJ funding; and the Department of Transportation (DOT) has said it will de-prioritize transportation funding to sanctuary cities, among other actions taken by the Administration. Most recently, on May 29, 2025, DHS published a list of jurisdictions, including Chelsea and Somerville, that it claims “obstruct the enforcement of Federal immigration laws” and warned that they must “immediately review and revise their policies” or face consequences. “The President cannot use federal funding as a weapon to force local governments to undermine public safety and participate in his mass deportation efforts,” said Oren Sellstrom, Litigation Director of Lawyers for Civil Rights, one of the Cities’ attorneys. “By

today’s preliminary injunction motion, we seek to protect sanctuary and welcoming cities, so they can continue to make public safety decisions that are in the best interests of their residents.” “Our residents know that our community is safer when police focus on preventing crime rather than raiding the local sandwich shop. We know that stripping cities of their rights, erodes everyone’s rights. We know that spreading hate and lies about an entire group of people has historically led to harm and injustice for all. And we know that withholding federal funding for no good reason threatens the health and safety of all residents,” said Somerville Mayor Katjana Ballantyne. “We urge the Administration to honor our Constitution, pursue humane immigration reform instead, and let us serve our communities as we know best. This isn’t something you should have to fight for in court—but Somerville will continue to stand up for our rights.” “Chelsea will not be bullied or intimidated into enforcing federal immigration laws, and we will not allow federal policies to dictate how we care for people that call Chelsea home,” said Chelsea

City Manager Fidel Maltez. “We stand firm—alongside our neighbors in Somerville and our partners at Lawyers for Civil Rights—in defending the rights and dignity of our immigrant communities. Chelsea is a city built by immigrants, sustained by their contributions, and strengthened by our shared values of inclusion, justice, and resilience. We will continue to protect and serve every resident, regardless of their immigration status.” Somerville received approximately \$19.4 million in federal funds to support a variety of community and public safety services in fiscal year 2024, including roadway safety initiatives, homelessness prevention services, and efforts to address and reduce youth tobacco usage and alcohol consumption. During that same fiscal year, Chelsea received approximately \$14.5 million in federal funding, including for education and a downtown reconstruction project. The case is City of Chelsea and City of Somerville v. Trump et al., 1:25-cv-10442 (D. Mass.).

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Somerville Community Preservation Act Funding Now Available for Historic Sites, Parks, and Public Spaces

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Preservation Committee

Applicants for open space, recreation, and historic preservation should note the following steps and deadlines:

CPA Screening Form recommended for all applicants, may be submitted any time.

Eligibility Determination Form required for all applicants, due July 15, 2025.

Full Applications required for all applicants, due September 15 2025.

For further information about how to apply for CPA funds for historic preservation or open space and recreation, please see the FY26 Application Instructions (bit.ly/4mHGN4Q).

Find all CPA program information and required forms at somervillema.gov/CPA. For any questions, contact Roberta Cameron, Community Preservation Act Manager, at rcameron@somervillema.gov.

FY25 CPA Grant Recipients

In FY25, the Community Preservation Commission (CPC) awarded \$4,000,000 to projects that will create affordable housing, improve City buildings and parks, and rehabilitate and preserve valuable community assets. Recipients include:

Somerville Community Land Trust: \$365,000

Both a historic preservation and affordable housing project, this grant will help SCLT to restore and convert the historic Elijah Walker House into 6 affordable housing units. CPA funds will be used for repairs of the building's exterior and structural elements to ensure preservation of the building's historic integrity.

Elizabeth Peabody House: \$172,000

Funds to be used to continue exterior renovation to the landmark Broadway building from which the organization operates its programs to benefit children and low-income families.

Somerville Museum: \$114,259

This grant will enable the Somerville Museum to undertake three projects to preserve artifacts in its collection and restore exterior elements to its building.

City of Somerville Department of Veterans' Services: \$18,500

This grant will initiate the restoration of the Veterans Memorial Cemetery and veteran monuments located throughout the city by preparing a condition assessment and treatment plan.

City of Somerville Art Farm: \$542,756

Funds to initiate the installation of a park atop the 2.1 acre site which was formerly a waste transfer station, where the Poplar Street Pump Station is currently under construction.

Quincy Street Park Renovations: \$500,000

This project will update a passive park located near Union Square providing accessibility and safety improvements and implementing the recent Pollinator Action Plan.

Nunziato Field Water Fountains: \$200,000

Two new water fountains will be installed at Nunziato Park, including one in the dog park area and one adjacent to the field.

Dilboy Auxiliary Field: \$100,000

This grant closes a funding gap to complete renovations of the natural grass athletic fields located next to Alewife Brook.

City of Somerville Kennedy Schoolyard Construction Project: \$200,000

Additional funds were combined with previous CPA awards to complete design for renovation of the Kennedy Schoolyard. The additional funds will allow for a larger area to be included in the design, and to include construction management in the design contract.

Somerville Affordable Housing Trust Fund: \$1,468,693

The FY25 Housing allocation was transferred to the Somerville Affordable Housing Trust Fund. SAHT administers grants for nonprofit organizations to create new affordable housing units as well as housing stabilization programs.



CAP HOSPITAL PROFITS AND SALARY OF HOSPITAL CEOS (H 1398)

By Bob Katzen

The Health Care Financing Committee held a hearing on a legislation that would require that in any hospital which accepts state funding, if the CEO's annual compensation is greater than 50 times the lowest paid employee, the facility will be subject to a civil penalty equal to the amount by which the Chief Executive Officer's

annual compensation exceeds 50 times the value of the lowest paid employee.

Another provision provides that any state-funded hospital whose annual operating margin (profit) is more than 8 percent will be subject to a civil penalty equal to the amount by which the annual operating margin exceeds 8 percent.

"[The bill] represents a necessary step to ensure that our state's burgeoning healthcare industry is guided by fairness and accountability," said sponsor Rep. Jim O'Day (D-West Boylston). "As it stands, hospitals and licensed healthcare institutions are some of the most profitable entities in Massachusetts, with executive pay rivaling that of the highest-paid corporate CEOs.

Meanwhile, safety-net hospitals – those serving low-income and underserved populations – often struggle to stay afloat. To address this inequity, the proposal introduces financial fairness standards by placing a cap on executive pay and redirecting excess revenue into the public, needs-based system."

O'Day continued, "When hospitals prioritize profit

over patient outcomes, treatments are delayed, emergency departments become understaffed and entire communities are left without critical care. As a result, this legislation is essential to safeguard public health."

Somerville's Anti-Displacement Task Force to Host

Film Screening & Panel Discussion
Thursday, June 12

Event to feature the ADTF-commissioned short film "Displacement Stories" and panel discussion with task force members

SOMERVILLE—As the next step after releasing three anti-displacement

reports in January, the City of Somerville's Anti-Displacement Task Force (ADTF) invites community members to a special event to highlight its work and continue the vital conversation around displacement in Somerville. All are welcome to join Task Force members, Mayor Katjana Ballantyne, City Councilors, and fellow community members for this opportunity on Thursday, June 12, to celebrate the

work of the Task Force and mark our community's commitment to creating stability for residents, businesses, nonprofits, and the cultural arts.

Film Screening & Panel Discussion:

Date: Thursday, June 12, 2025

Location: East Somerville Community School (50 Cross St.)

Time: 6 p.m.

The evening will begin with a complimentary dinner and a recorded presentation of key findings from the three ADTF committees published earlier this year on residential, business/nonprofits, and cultural arts displacement. A screening of Displacement Stories, a short film commissioned as part of the ADTF's work will follow. The film features

personal stories of Somerville residents impacted by displacement. Afterward, a panel discussion with members of the ADTF task force will feature their reflections on their work.

"Displacement is a word that doesn't tell the whole story. Every time a resident, business, nonprofit, or artist is displaced from Somerville it means the costs of staying here were just too high, so we lose one more thread from the fabric of our community. My administration is committed to fighting displacement, and I want to thank the Task Force for this vital work to support our mission to drive down displacement pressures and to keep our community whole," said Mayor Ballantyne.

The ADTF was called into action in

2023 by Mayor Ballantyne in response to not only the housing crisis but also rental pressures on local businesses, nonprofits, and artists and cultural organizations. Three ADTF committees were formed to develop recommendations aimed at reducing the rate of displacement across all of these areas. Committee members were drawn from the community as part of the administration's commitment to inclusive leadership. The committee reports were released in January. Work is now underway to review for the most actionable recommendations, prioritize next steps, and determine what resources are needed to move forward on recommendations.

"This concluding event of the Anti-Displacement Task Force is an important celebration of the community

members involved in this project and the unique approach we took to get here," said Luis Quizhpe, Strategic Planning & Equity Manager in Somerville's Office of Strategic Planning and Community Development. "The task force was an exercise in co-design, where our neighbors, together with City staff, set to preserving the tapestry that is our collective identity as a community. Each thread of this tapestry represents our collective contribution to what makes this city a great place to live, work and create in, and what makes each thread worth preserving."

To learn more and review the ADTF reports, visit: voice.somervillema.gov/adtf

CONTAGIOUS DISEASES AND POLICE, FIREFIGHTERS AND EMERGENCY PERSONNEL (H 2961)

By Bob Katzen

The Public Service Committee held a hearing on a bill that would provide that police, fire and EMT personnel making claims for death, disability or medical services from contagious diseases – who did not evidence any such condition at the time of entry into service – will be presumed to have acquired these

contagious conditions in the line of duty. If it can be shown that non-service-connected risk factors accidents, or hazards caused such incapacity, the presumption can be rebutted.

The list of diseases includes COVID-19, Hepatitis A, B or C, TB, HIV and other conditions found by the Commissioner of Public Health

to have a statistically significant correlation with police, fire or emergency medical service.

The bill would expand current law which establishes that disability or death of public safety personnel resulting from certain conditions of cancer, as well as disease of the lungs/respiratory tract, is presumed to be caused in the line of duty.

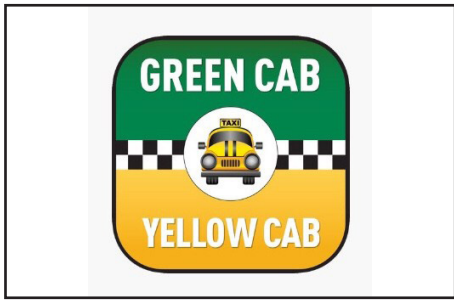
Co-sponsor Rep. Greg Schwartz (D-Newton) said that as a physician he understands the increased risk these public service workers face of contracting infectious diseases. "We ask our first responders to engage with the public in situations that often carry increased risk of personal harm to the responder," said Schwartz. "They perform

invaluable, often lifesaving, service to strangers in the line of duty. It is the least we can do to acknowledge the risk to themselves that they take on to serve others in times of need, and we should support them when that service likely is the cause of disease, disability or death."

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Persons with disabilities who need ADA accommodations to access this program, please contact 311 (617-666-3311) in advance."

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne,
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Blue Envelope Program: Bridging the Gap Between Police and Drivers on the Autism Spectrum

By William Tauro

The Blue Envelope Helps Bridge the Gap Between Police and People on the Autism Spectrum

The Blue Envelope Program is a transformative initiative designed to foster safer and more empathetic interactions between law enforcement and drivers with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) during traffic stops. Recognizing that traffic stops can be particularly stressful for individuals with ASD due to sensory sensitivities and communication challenges, this program provides a simple yet effective tool to enhance understanding and reduce anxiety for both drivers and officers.

The program, implemented in states like Massachusetts, Connecticut, Arizona, and others, provides drivers with a specially designed blue envelope to store essential documents such as their driver's license, registration, and insurance card. The envelope's exterior features clear communication guidelines tailored for law enforce-

ment, alerting officers that the driver may have autism and offering tips for effective interaction. These tips include using simple, direct language, allowing extra time for responses, and being mindful of sensory triggers like flashing lights or loud radios, which can heighten anxiety for individuals with ASD. Instructions for drivers are also included, such as keeping hands on the steering wheel and what to expect during a stop, helping to prepare them for the encounter.

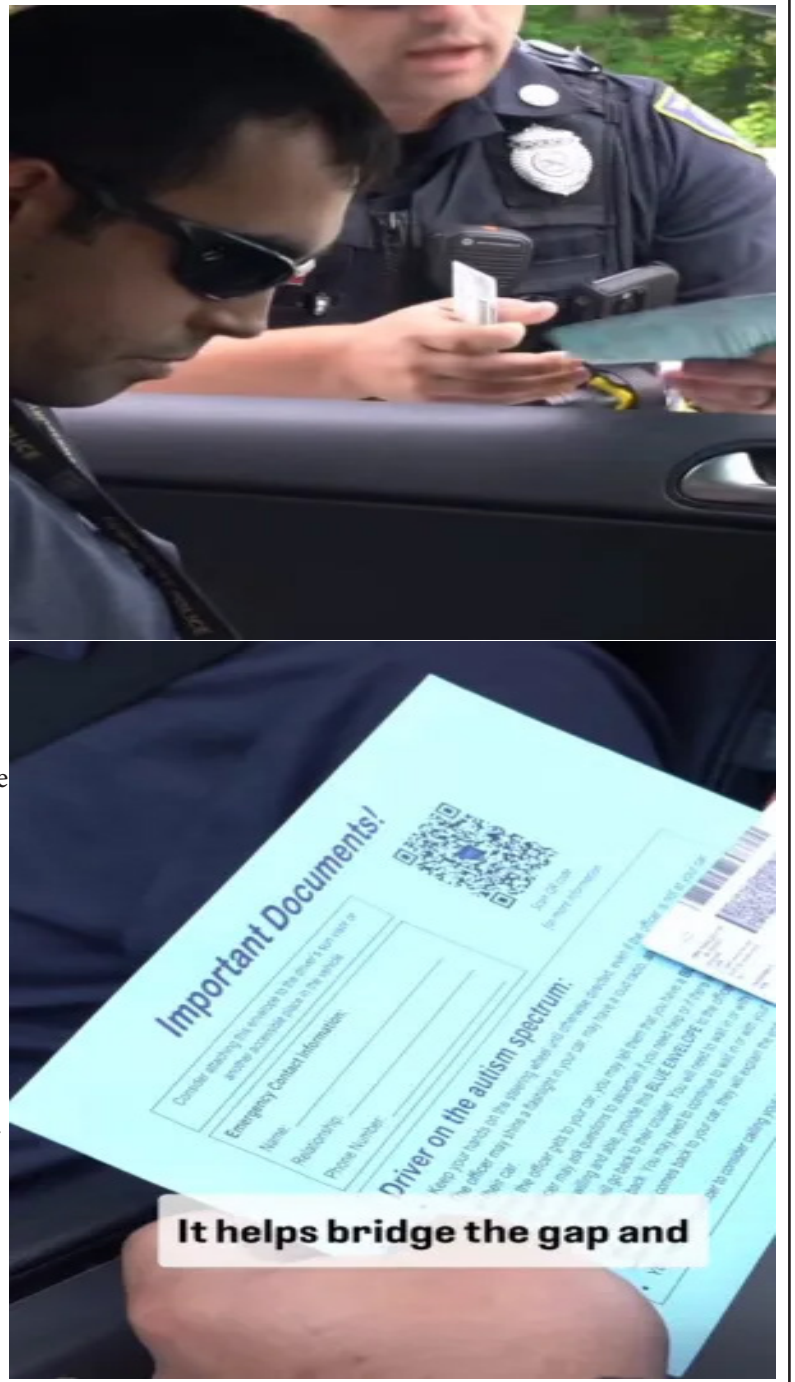
Developed through partnerships between law enforcement agencies, autism advocacy groups, and community members, the Blue Envelope Program emphasizes empathy and inclusivity. For example, in Massachusetts, the initiative was launched with collaboration from the Massachusetts State Police, the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association, Advocates for Autism of Massachusetts, and The Arc of Massachusetts. Officers receive training to recognize behaviors associated with autism, such as stimming or limited eye contact, reducing the risk

of misunderstandings that could escalate situations.

The program is voluntary and free, with envelopes available at police stations, motor vehicle offices, or online in participating regions. Drivers can request multiple envelopes for different vehicles, ensuring accessibility. Advocacy groups and law enforcement alike praise the initiative for its simplicity and impact, noting that it not only supports drivers with ASD but also equips officers to better serve their communities.


By providing a visual cue and clear guidelines, the Blue Envelope Program is a vital step toward creating a more inclusive and understanding environment on the road, ensuring safer interactions for everyone involved.

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FLY FLAG OUTSIDE CONDOS (H 1555)

By Bob Katzen

Another proposal before the Housing Committee would prohibit any condominium association from denying a unit

owner the right to fly or display the flag of the United States, the official flag of the United States Armed Forces or a Prisoner of War/Missing in Action flag in a window of

the unit. The measure limits the size of the flag to 4.5 feet by 6 feet in size and prohibits any flag from obstructing the sightlines

of other unit owners. "This bill stems from a constituent several years ago being told they could not fly the American flag- which she vehemently

disagreed with," said sponsor Rep. Dave Mura-dian (R-Grafton).

ALLOW PETS IN PUBLIC STATE-FUNDED HOUSING (H 1476)

By Bob Katzen

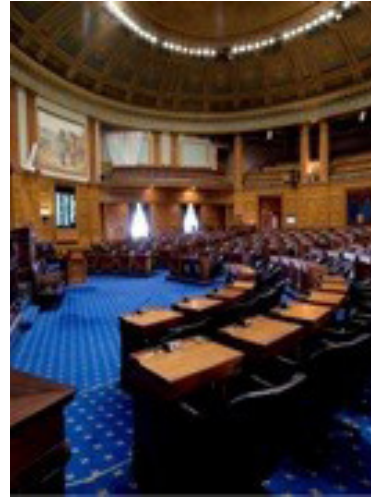
A bill heard by the Housing Committee would reinstate the elderly state-aided housing pet program which was inadvertently eliminated when the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities was established in 2023. The program allows elderly residents of public

housing to have pets. This bill would also expand the pet program to apply to all state-aided housing, without restrictions on a dog's breed, size, weight or appearance. In addition, it would prevent state-aided public housing facilities from requiring pet declawing in line with Massa-

chusetts law prohibiting this practice, requiring unreasonably expensive pet deposits or evicting a tenant because they own a pet. Another provision would create an advisory group to help develop and effectively implement pet-friendly policies in state-funded housing.

"Elderly residents should

not have to choose between access to housing and keeping their pets," said sponsor Rep. Tackey Chan (D-Quincy). "The provisions outlined in this bill are crucial for ensuring elderly residents in state-aided housing can remain with their pets safely and without unfair restrictions."



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RESTRICT ABILITY OF CRIMINAL OFFENDERS TO PROFIT FROM THEIR CRIME

By Bob Katzen

The Judiciary Committee held a hearing on a bill that would restrict the ability of criminal offenders to profit financially by undertaking any ventures that capitalize on the in-

famy of their crime.

The bill sets forth a procedure to determine if the criminal offender is attempting to make money from the notoriety surrounding their actions by allowing the Attorney

General, by and through the Division of Victim Compensation, to investigate and monitor such profits, and to distribute these profits to victims who were victimized by the underlying crime.

“This bill seeks to protect victims of crime by making sure that incarcerated felons do not reap unexpected financial benefits from their wrongful actions,” said sponsor Rep. Brad Jones (R-North Reading). “It not only

takes steps to ensure that criminals do not profit from their crimes while in jail but also establishes a process for using this money to compensate their victims as a form of restitution.”

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<input type="checkbox"/> Quality instant coffee	<input type="checkbox"/> Toothbrush & tooth paste
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<input type="checkbox"/> Energy drink	SURVIVAL
<input type="checkbox"/> Beef jerky	<input type="checkbox"/> First aid kit
<input type="checkbox"/> Dried fruit	<input type="checkbox"/> Water bottle with built in filter
<input type="checkbox"/> Fruit leathers	<input type="checkbox"/> Heat-pack
<input type="checkbox"/> Trail mix	<input type="checkbox"/> Multi-purpose tool
<input type="checkbox"/> Nuts	TREATS:
<input type="checkbox"/> Granola bars	<input type="checkbox"/> Chocolates
<input type="checkbox"/> Protein powder packets	<input type="checkbox"/> Fruit snacks
<input type="checkbox"/> Restaurant gift cards	<input type="checkbox"/> Cookie snack packs
HELP THEM CONNECT	<input type="checkbox"/> Candy (individually wrapped)
<input type="checkbox"/> Journal & pen	<input type="checkbox"/> Mints
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Rats Persist in Somerville and Other Local Communities: Are Officials Doing Enough?

By William Tauro

Rat infestations continue to plague Massachusetts communities, frustrating residents and raising questions about whether elected officials are tackling the issue effectively. My take: while some cities are stepping up, efforts often lack the scale and consistency needed to curb this growing problem.

In Boston, rat complaints surged 111% over the past decade, driven by poor trash management and aging infrastructure. The city's 2024 Boston Rodent Action Plan (BRAP), led by Mayor Michelle Wu, coordinates multiple agencies and emphasizes better waste practices, with targeted efforts in

hotspots like Dorchester and Allston. Yet, residents report ongoing issues, and a proposed Office of Pest Control remains under discussion, suggesting a reactive rather than proactive approach.

Other Massachusetts cities face similar struggles. New Bedford's severe infestation prompted officials to deploy poison, traps, and sealing efforts, but results are unclear. Cambridge's innovative composting and free pest control programs have reduced rodent activity, with only 130 sightings in 2023, while Somerville uses high-tech electric traps to track colonies. Brookline, Newton, and Watertown report rising complaints, with actions like sealed

bins and public education, but budget constraints and inconsistent enforcement hinder progress. Smaller towns like Peabody and Belmont have seen park closures due to rats, with local boards scrambling to respond.

My Thoughts: Officials are trying—Cambridge's composting and Somerville's traps show promise—but most efforts are patchwork. Rats thrive on human habits like improper trash disposal, and without sustained, well-funded programs to overhaul waste systems and infrastructure, the problem persists. Smaller towns, with fewer resources, are especially stretched. A statewide push for rodent-proof bins

and public education, like Alberta's \$372,000 rat-free model, could set a standard. Until then, residents and officials must work together to starve rats out. Are your local leaders doing enough, or are rats still ruling?



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Should We Sympathize with Somerville's Arrested Worker Amid Homeless Crackdown?

By William Tauro

In Somerville, Massachusetts, a 21-year-old Whole Foods employee, Eric Illouz, was arrested on March 30, 2025, for allegedly assaulting a panhandler with a knife at Assembly Row. Reports indicate Illouz, reacting to a perceived threat, grabbed the panhandler and held a knife to their throat. Does that make it right?

Illouz's claim of PTSD and workplace stress might evoke some empathy, but wielding a knife in a public altercation is a dangerous escalation. Without clear evidence of imminent

danger, his actions outweigh claims for leniency, making sympathy difficult.

The broader narrative of State Troopers "cleaning up" Somerville's homeless issue, as some suggest, doesn't fit here—Somerville Police handled Illouz's arrest, not troopers. Claims that elected officials restrict local police likely stem from frustration with policies like Somerville's sanctuary city status or its 2021 drug diversion resolution, which prioritizes treatment over arrests for drug possession. However, this incident involved assault, not panhandling or addiction, and police acted

swiftly. The real issue lies in balancing public safety with compassion for the homeless.

Heavy-handed enforcement may clear streets temporarily, but it sidesteps addiction and poverty's root causes, which officials must address to prevent recurring tensions.

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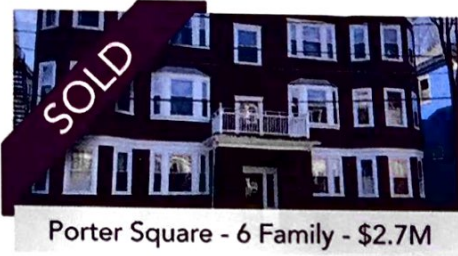
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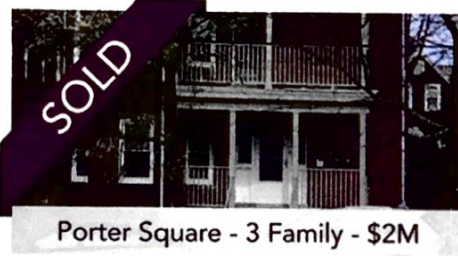
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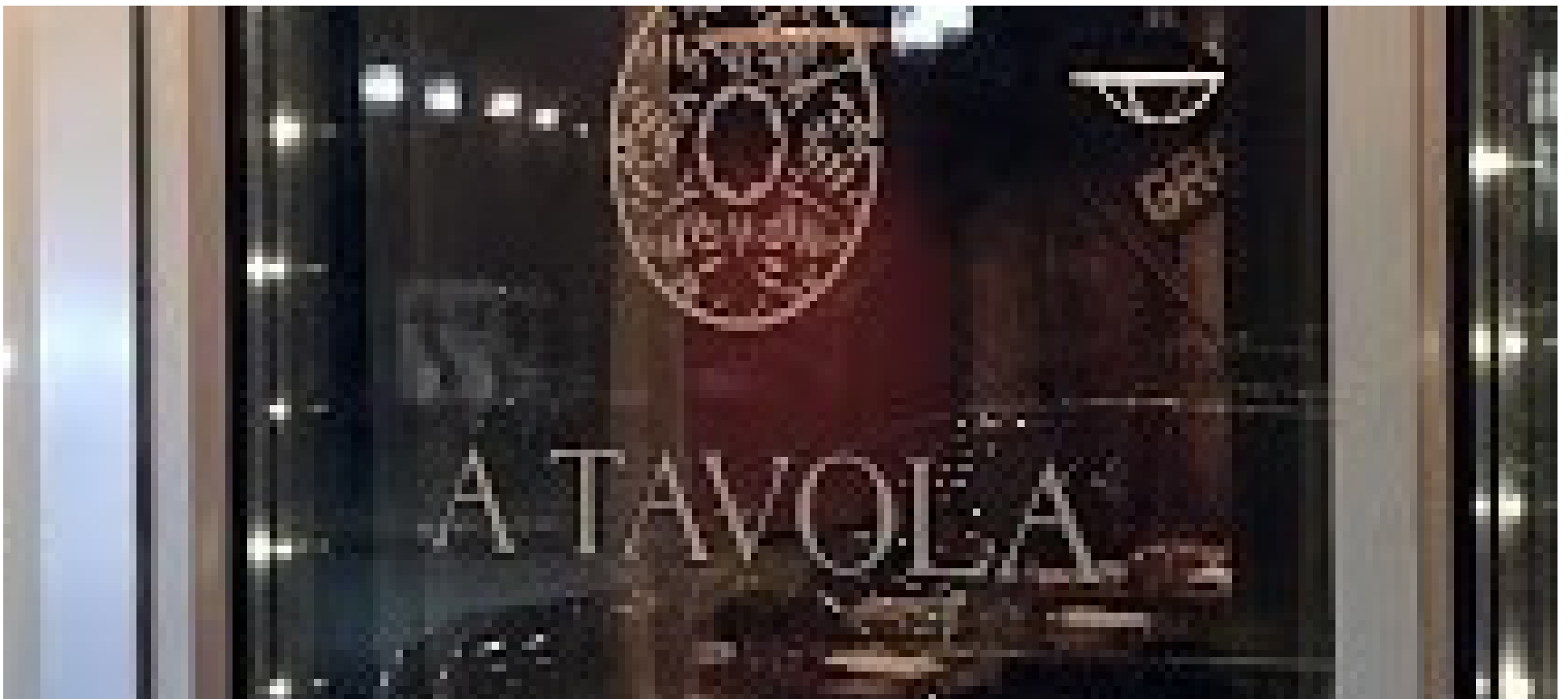
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