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VOL.1 NO.329-267

SOMERVILLE/MEDFORD MASS.

Tuesday June 24th, 2025

\$532 MILLION FISCAL 2025 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET (S 2529)



NEWS TALK OUT
LOUD/SPEAK UP



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Massachusetts Housing Crisis:

“Can We Build Our Way Out, or Is
It Time to Rethink Growth?”



Somerville Police
Real Life Somerville
Police Stories Page

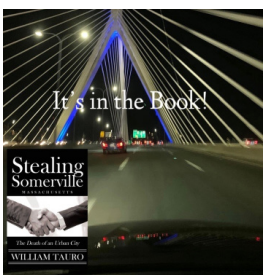
The Elephant in the Room
Can No Longer Be Ignored:
Police Suicide



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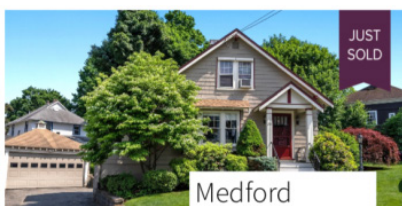
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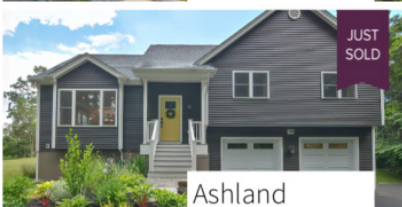
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Somerville/Medford Remembering Burton F. Faulkner Jr.

Obituary

Burton F. Faulkner Jr., Of Arlington, formerly of Lexington and Somerville, affectionately known as Burt, passed away peacefully with his family by his side on June 20, 2025.

He was the beloved husband of the late Maxine (Lovell) Faulkner. Burt was a loving father to Burton F. Faulkner III of Somerville, Sherry Faulkner Ciardi of Win-

chester, and Jennifer Faulkner and her husband Scott Busnach of Reading. He was a cherished grandfather to Estelle, Liza, Ryann, Sydney, Scott, and Arianna. Burt was predeceased by his dear sister, Nancy Dupuis.

A funeral procession will commence from the George L. Doherty Funeral Home, located at 855 Broadway (Powder House Sq.) Somerville, on Thurs-

day morning at 10:00, followed by a Funeral Mass at St. Eulalia Church in Winchester at 11:00. Relatives and friends are invited to attend. Calling hours will be held on Wednesday from 4:00 to 7:00. Interment will take place at Wildwood Cemetery in Winchester.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Burts memory to the Michael J. Fox Foundation.



Somerville/Medford Remembering Edith (Zieba) Teves

Obituary

Edith (Zieba) Teves, of Cambridge, passed away on June 14, 2025, she was 74.

Born and raised in Darmstadt, Germany she was one of eight children of the late Stanislaw Zieba and Mathilde C. (Bender) Zieba-Sheehan. She immigrated to the United

States as a teenager with her family.

Edith was the beloved wife of the late Edmund B. Teves and devoted mother of Edmund F. Teves of Woburn, Jennifer Teves of Cambridge and the late Gina Teves. Loving "Ma" to her grandchildren Kayla, Jeremy, Dylan, Amanda and Aiden.

Dear sister of Klaus, Jurek "Dick", Ron, Daniel, John, Christiane, and Michael.

In keeping with Edith's wishes, a private burial will take place at Cambridge Cemetery with her daughter Gina.



Somerville/Medford Remembering Anna M. (Trebino) O'Connell

Obituary

Mrs. Anna M. (Trebino) O'Connell, of Medford, passed away on June 17, 2025, at the age of 96. Born and raised in Medford, she was the daughter of Carmelina (Cassasa) and Frederick Trebino. The beloved wife of James A. O'Connell, they were married in St. Clements Church and settled in Medford to raise their family. Together they celebrated 68 years of marriage.

Anna, was devout in her faith. She supported the Marguerite

D'Youville Grey Nuns, and was an active member of the St. Francis Mother's Club and Bowling League. She volunteered her time at the North Shore Music Circus, and served as a coach for Medford Girls Youth Baseball. She enjoyed everything about sports, especially the Red Sox and the Bruins, and could drive a golfball like a pro. She loved cards: Bridge, Canasta and Cribbage were her favorite. She thrived on competition. Above all, Anna loved spending time with her family, and life long friends.

In addition to her husband, James A. O'Connell, she is survived by her sons: James G. O'Connell of Alpharetta, Georgia, and Daniel G. O'Connell of Medford, and daughter the late Joan E. O'Connell, of Medford. Cherished grandmother of James, Julianne, Jaclyn, Jennifer and John and the great-grandmother of three. Dear sister of the late Vera, Romeo, Alice, Marie, John, Charles, Andrew, Frank, George and Frederick, Anna is further survived by many loving nieces and nephews.

Calling Hours will be held in the George L. Doherty Funeral Home, Monday morning, June 30th from 9:00 to 10:30AM, followed by a Funeral Mass celebrated at St. Raphael Church, Medford at 11:00AM. Relatives and friends invited to attend. Services will conclude with burial at Oak Grove Cemetery, Medford.

In lieu of flowers, donations in Anna's memory can be made to the Alzheimer's Association at <http://www.alz.org>



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Massachusetts Housing Crisis: “Can We Build Our Way Out, or Is It Time to Rethink Growth?”



By William Tauro

Massachusetts is choking on its own success. Skyrocketing home prices, record-low affordability, and a housing shortage are driving families out and threatening the state’s future. In Greater Boston, median home prices hit \$825,000 in May 2025, a record high, while sales slowed as buyers balked.

Governor Maura Healey’s \$5.1 billion housing bond bill, signed in 2024, promises to unlock new construction, but critics argue it’s a drop in the bucket—or worse, a recipe for overdevelopment that could erode the Bay State’s charm. This isn’t just a policy debate; it’s a fight for Massachusetts’ soul.

Let’s talk about why housing is the hottest issue in the state and what you think the fix should be.

Why Housing Is the Talk of Massachusetts From Springfield to Cape Cod, the housing crisis dominates local politics. Young professionals can’t afford to stay, retirees are stuck in oversized homes, and new arrivals—legal immigrants and migrants alike—strain an already tight market. In many cities and towns, “a proposed 200-unit apartment complex sparked protests over traffic and school overcrowding”]. The numbers are stark:

Massachusetts needs 200,000 new homes by 2030 to keep up, but zoning laws, NIMBYism, and high costs stall progress.

Posts on X reflect the frustration. Users lament “Taxachusetts” pricing families out, with some blaming “Healey Hotels” (a term for state-funded migrant shelters) for diverting resources, though data shows shelters house only a fraction of new arrivals. Others point to crumbling infrastructure and high taxes as barriers

to growth. The sentiment is clear: people feel squeezed, and they’re demanding solutions.

The Big Divide: Build More or Slow Down? Two camps dominate the debate:

1. Build, Build, Build Healey’s bond bill aims to streamline permitting and fund affordable housing. Supporters, including developers and young voters, say Massachusetts must densify—think more apartments near transit hubs like the MBTA. In Boston, Mayor Michelle Wu’s Acquisition Fund targets affordable units, but progress is slow.

The pitch: more homes lower prices and keep talent in state. But will it wreck historic neighborhoods or overburden schools?

2. Protect What Makes Massachusetts Special Opponents—often homeowners and suburbanites—warn that unchecked development threatens green spaces and small-town vibes. In [Your Town], [insert example, e.g., “residents blocked a condo project to save a lo-

cal park”]. They argue for stricter zoning and incentives to renovate existing homes. Critics of Healey’s plan say it favors developers over communities and ignores infrastructure strain. On X, some call for a halt to “sanctuary state” policies, claiming they exacerbate demand, though evidence is mixed.

Why This Matters to You

Housing isn’t abstract—it’s personal. Can you afford to live where you grew up? Will your kids have a shot at homeownership? In 2024, only 15% of Massachusetts voters turned out for local elections, letting a minority shape these debates. Your town’s zoning board or city council is deciding right now whether that empty lot becomes apartments or stays vacant. If you’re not in the room, someone else is.

Let’s Get Talking

This is Massachusetts’ make-or-break moment. Here’s how to jump in:

• What’s your fix? More apartments, tougher zoning, or something else? Share on X with #MA-HousingCrisis.

• Check your local agenda. Search [Your Town]’s website for the next planning board meeting. Show up or stream it.

• Ask the tough question: Should Massachusetts prioritize growth or preservation? Post your take below in the comments.

The housing crisis isn’t just policy—it’s about who gets to call Massachusetts home. Let’s make this the conversation no one can ignore.

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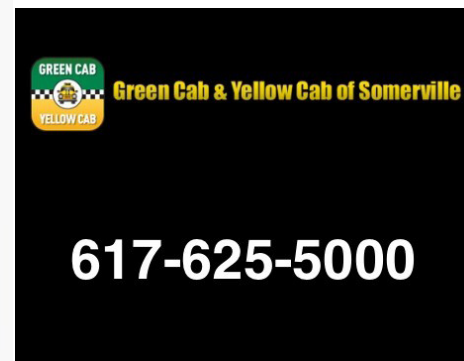
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UTILITY RATE INCREASES (S 2529)



UTILITY RATE INCREASES

By Bob Katzen

Senate 6-33, rejected an amendment that would strike a section of the

supplemental budget that would allow any rate increases proposed by utility companies to take effect in 60 days, if the proposed

increase is not reviewed and acted upon by the Department of Public Utilities (DPU).

Co-sponsor of the amendment to strike the section, Sen. Kelley Dooner (D-Taunton), said it is not good government for rate hikes to take effect without a full review by DPU and that this would undermine regulatory oversight and expose ratepayers once again to even higher increases. She argued that the Senate should be strength-

ening oversight, not making it easier for utilities to raise their rates behind closed doors.

“An increase in utility rates for the purpose of expanding electric charging stations at a time when families in the commonwealth are struggling to pay utility bills at their current rates is detrimental and unnecessary,” said amendment co-sponsor Sen. Ryan Fattman (R-Sutton) who voted to strike the section.

Sen. Mike Barrett (D-Lexington), the chief opponent of the amendment, did not respond to several e-mails from Beacon Hill Roll Call asking him why he opposed the amendment.

(A “Yes” vote is for the amendment that would prohibit the increase from taking effect without DPU approval. A “No” vote is for allowing the rate increase to take effect without DPU approval.)

Sen. Patricia Jehlen No

Somerville Police Department Achieves Third Consecutive MA Police Accreditation Award

Accreditation demonstrates an agency’s commitment to maintaining professional excellence in policing

SOMERVILLE—Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and Somerville Police Chief Shumeane Benford are honored to announce that the Somerville Police Department (SPD) this month has earned its third consecutive Accreditation award from the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Commission (MPAC), following an in-depth and detailed assessment process.

Accreditation is a self-initiated process by which police agencies voluntarily strive to meet and maintain standards on best prac-

tices that have been established for the law enforcement profession.

“I’m grateful for our Police Department’s unwavering commitment to best serving our community and I want to congratulate SPD on this meaningful recognition,” said Mayor Katjana Ballantyne.

Achieving Accreditation status indicates that the agency is committed to meeting professional standards, is willing to be regularly assessed to confirm compliance, and agrees to correct any deficiencies discovered during the process to establish or re-establish compliance with the program standards.

To achieve Reaccreditation, SPD was required to meet all 274 of the program’s mandatory standards and 78 optional standards. SPD exceeded this requirement, meeting 85 of the optional standards. Many of the standards aim to verify that the agency has specific, written policies, procedures, or directives covering various aspects of its operations, including police services to the public, internal administration and organization, training and development, facilities, equipment, and more.

The process, overseen by SPD Accreditation Manager Sgt. Marc DiFava, included a self-assessment by the department and a multi-day,

on-site assessment by a trained team of Commission-appointed assessors. Assessors visited Somerville in January 2025 to evaluate the agency’s compliance with MPAC standards. Following the visit, the Commission voted to approve SPD’s Reaccreditation. Accreditation awards are granted for three-year periods, and SPD will be due for Reaccreditation once again in 2028.

“Achieving Reaccreditation is a major milestone for our department and the community members we serve. Our team, led by Sgt. DiFava, worked extremely hard to ensure we met and exceeded each standard in the process,” said Chief Benford.

“The designation recognizes our commitment to the highest industry standards and the importance of our policies and practices in upholding the values of our community through equitable, fair, and accountable police practice.”

SPD first received Accreditation in 2019 and was Reaccredited in 2022. The department previously earned MPAC Certification in 2017, which is typically attained by agencies prior to Accreditation.

Somerville is one of 121 agencies currently Accredited by MPAC. To learn more about the Commission, Accreditation, and its benefits, visit masspoliceaccred.net.

MEDFORD VFW POST 1012 HAS A NEW COMMANDER

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

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them out!” Somerville/Medford News Weekly/Boston News Group

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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.

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Thank you for your continued support.



The Elephant in the Room Can No Longer Be Ignored: Police Suicide



By Bob Long D/LT. (Ret.) Mass State Police
June 20, 2025

More police officers die by suicide each year than are killed in the line of duty. Blue H.E.L.P., an organization that tracks police suicides, reported that 228 officers took their own lives in 2019—far surpassing the 132 officers who died in the line of duty that same year.

Even more troubling is the fact that suicide can become contagious within a department and come in clusters. In November of 2023, four current and retired police officers from the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department, both male and female, died by suicide within the same 24-hour period. In early 2025, four current and former Harris County, TX Sheriff Deputies, both male and female, died by suicide within a six-week period. Last month, a Lawrence, MA Police Officer took his own life and days later another Lawrence officer's wife committed suicide. It was a very sad period for Lawrence PD to bury both in the same week. Yet, incredibly this week, a second Lawrence officer committed suicide while another officer's wife died from a heart attack. Finally, a MA trooper who died years ago in a tragic cruiser accident left behind seven children. Tragically, last year his wife committed suicide.

According to the New England Police Benevolent Association, 15 police officers in New England have taken their lives during the first four months of 2025, with 11 of those deaths occurring in Massachusetts. The true numbers are

likely higher, as many suicides go unreported to organizations that track these statistics. A 2018 study estimated that alcohol is a factor in 85 to 90 percent of police suicides nationwide, with firearms being the most common method.

When I first came on the job, there was no stress unit to help us cope with the aftermath of traumatic incidents. In the early 1970s, one of my academy classmates—who was stationed with me in Concord—responded to a horrific crash on Route 128 in Waltham. A vehicle traveling southbound became airborne, flew over the guardrail, and crashed into the windshield of a car traveling northbound, decapitating the driver. The very next day, my classmate was back at work as if nothing had happened. I don't know if he ever received help to deal with that horrifying memory, but I imagine it has haunted him throughout his retirement.

In 1974, while working undercover, I was shot and wounded by friendly fire during the arrest of an armed federal fugitive wanted for firearms trafficking and multiple armed robberies. As I attempted to extract the subject from the back seat of a car, he reached for his .357 Magnum. Thankfully, Trooper Ronnie Guilmette and Special Agent Bob MacDonald of ATF, were better marksmen, and immediately neutralized the threat. Six weeks after surgery, I was itching to get back to work. Like many of us, I accepted that this was just part of the job we signed up for.

However, the trauma didn't end there. Several months later, the suspect's family requested an inquest. After several days of testimony, the judge eventually ruled the shooting justified. But two years later, just before stepping out on New Year's Eve, I was served legal papers by a U.S. Marshal: the family was suing us for millions in a wrongful death case in federal court. The family's two attorneys—one later imprisoned for mob-related crimes and the other disbarred for serious misconduct—alleged we were corrupt cops engaged in clandestine illegal activity. The media ran with these false allegations, devastating not only me, but my family and loved ones. It was one of the lowest points of my life. Thankfully, Judge David Mazzone saw through

the baseless claims and granted summary judgment in our favor and threw the case out of court. Of course, the press never followed up to report that we had been cleared.

Years later, I faced another intense period of stress during a painful divorce and a custody battle for my two children, one of whom was battling a life-threatening disease. The emotional toll triggered physical symptoms: TMJ, cracked teeth from grinding, heart palpitations, digestive issues, anxiety, depression, weight loss—and eventually alcohol abuse to help me sleep. Outwardly, I worked hard and appeared strong while running the Middlesex DA's Office, but inside, I was breaking. I knew I needed help.

By then, the department had a one-person stress unit, but I was reluctant to use it. My ego was too big to let anyone know I could be struggling and feared the stigma, worried about how I would be perceived by leadership if word got out. As cops, one of our most valuable survival traits is cynicism: trust no one. But that cynicism can work against us when we need help the most. So, I stayed silent.

As time continued to pass, I began to suspect I might be suffering from accumulative PTSD, following a series of high-profile investigations and responding to critical incidents. One day, while working a detail at Logan Airport, I stepped into a phone booth (remember those?) and rifled through the Yellow Pages. I found Catholic Charities and reached out for help—quietly and confidentially. No one on the job ever knew. I later returned for additional counseling after investigating numerous gruesome murders, some involving children, and following testimony in a murder trial where a mobster's son had hired a Winter Hill Gang hitman to kill me. When the hitman was arrested, authorities found a card in his wallet containing my name, a description of my undercover car, my license plate number, and even the fact that I kept a Red Sox hat in the back window. Sometimes, you simply need to talk to a professional who isn't emotionally involved, just to vent.

Why am I sharing all this? Because I know I'm not alone. Many of you have endured your own emotional

and physical battles after responding to countless critical incidents. If sharing my story helps even one brother or sister trooper step back from the edge, then it's worth it. I also want you to know that times have changed. Getting help no longer carries the stigma it once did—thankfully.

About a decade ago, I served as Chairman of the Boston Police Foundation, a nonprofit that raises private funds to address budget gaps for technology, training, equipment, officer wellness, and safety programs. After several Boston officers died by suicide, the Board and I made suicide prevention and stress reduction our top priority. We raised over \$1 million, brought in mental health experts, and hosted presentations by Dr. Kevin Gilmartin, a former police officer and world-renowned behavioral scientist. His presentation was a tremendous success, leading many officers to seek support through the department's Peer Support Unit.

In years past, many officer suicides were quietly written off as accidental firearm discharges to ensure families would not lose insurance benefits. As a result, the underlying causes were rarely examined or addressed. Thankfully, that's no longer the case. In 2022, Congress passed the Public Safety Officer Support Act of 2022, which provides federal benefits to families of officers who die by suicide, provided the officer had sought help at some point beforehand. This was a major step forward.

Unfortunately, I know of no organization that tracks suicides among retired officers. Yet we've all known too many colleagues who have taken their lives after retirement. It's a shame we can't simply deposit our emotional burdens into a dumpster behind the Supply Depot when we turn in guns and uniforms.

If you, a family member or a colleague are struggling, I strongly encourage you to contact the department's Employee Assistance Unit (EAU). Even in retirement, emotional wounds may still be directly tied to our time on the job. Today, the EAU is staffed by 12 trained officers who provide confidential, anonymous support. They take no notes, no names, and offer

a safe space to vent or seek guidance where to get help, including for PTSD. If you're still reluctant to contact EAU, hotlines such as 1-800-COPLINE—staffed 24/7 by retired officers—are also available.

You should also know about the LEADER Program, developed by the former head of Boston's Peer Support Unit in partnership with McLean Hospital (617.855.3141). This program offers inpatient and outpatient mental health and addiction services exclusively for current and former police officers and military members. A review on their website from a 20-year veteran reads: "Ordinarily, I would not be receptive to this type of environment, but I was very comfortable with the counselors, other officers, and the way we were treated by the McLean staff."

Currently, I'm working with SPAM President Brian Williams and FMSTA President Jim Lane to secure a corporate sponsor so that every current and former trooper receives a copy of Dr. Gilmartin's book, Emotional Survival for Law Enforcement: A Guide for Officers and Their Families. A retired commander from the Las Vegas Metro Police Department once said of the book: "Dr. Gilmartin's book has probably saved more lives, marriages, and careers than all the classes and seminars put together. It should be required reading for every cop." We're presently in discussions with a sponsor to fund 3,000 copies. If you know of others who may be willing to contribute to this important cause, please contact us.

In closing, I was inspired to write this article after spending time with the widow and children of a retired trooper who committed suicide a year after retiring. I'm confident, if that officer knew of the emotional, psychological, and financial nightmare he left behind for his family to deal with, he never would have followed through in the execution of his plan. If you see a brother or sister in blue struggling, do something!

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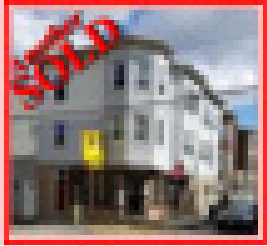


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The Somerville/Medford News Weekly

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



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PROHIBIT USE OF NATIVE AMERICAN MASCOTS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS (S 312)



By Bob Katzen

Another bill heard by the Education Committee would prohibit public schools from using an athletic team name, logo or mascot which is associated with Native Americans. The bill bans the current and future use of any of these mascots. Any school that does not comply with this law would not be eligible for discretionary state education grants.

“This bill is long overdue,” said Sen. Jo Comerford (D-Northampton). “Native Americans are sovereign peoples—not mascots, not caricatures. The continued use of Native imagery in school mascots is dehumanizing. It perpetuates harmful stereotypes and has been shown to cause psychological harm, especially for Native youth.”

In 2024, a similar bill was approved by the Education Committee and was sent to the House Ways and Means Committee where it died from lack of further action.

“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.”

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.

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.



Blockbusters and Blankets: SomerMovie Fest Returns Thursday, July 10

Mayor Katjana Ballantyne is inviting the Somerville community to break out the picnic blankets and popcorn, as SomerMovie Fest 2025 is bringing six free outdoor films to City parks this summer. From robot adventures and '90s cult classics to Oscar winners and pink-powered blockbusters, there's a

movie night for everyone. Movies begin at dusk, and showtimes are approximate. Arrive early to grab a good spot, get comfortable, and enjoy the summer evening with neighbors and friends. The series kicks off with *The Wild Robot* on

Thursday, July 10th at approximately 8:30 p.m. at the Lincoln Park Softball Field. For more information, please visit somervillema.gov/moviefest.



Mayor Katjana Ballantyne Honored to Announce Somerville Community Health Worker Division Achieves Program of the Year Award

SOMERVILLE – Mayor Katjana Ballantyne and the City of Somerville Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) are honored to announce that the City's Community Health Worker (CHW) Division has been named the 2025 Community Health Worker Program of the Year by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the Massachusetts Association of Community Health Workers.

community Health Worker Conference, the award honors exceptional programs that improve community wellbeing through trust-building, innovation, and direct service. "This is a well-earned recognition for a team that brings compassion, persistence, and deep community knowledge to every aspect of their work," said Mayor Ballantyne. "Our Community Health Workers are helping connect residents with life-saving resources and support. They are transforming public health in Somerville from the ground up."

sive review of the CHW Division's policies, practices, and impact, including testimonials from residents and Mayor Ballantyne. This year's honorees include CHWs Han Hogan-Rigg, Cynthia Bonilla, Emmanuel L. Charles, Larissa Loschiavo, and CHW Manager Andria Benvenuto. Honoring Community Health Workers On Tuesday, June 24, Mayor Ballantyne signed a proclamation honoring the week of June 15 – 21, as CHW Awareness and Appreciation Week in Somerville.

For photos of the proclamation signing, please click [here](#). About Somerville's Community Health Worker Division Launched in 2023, the City's CHW Division is housed within the Health and Human Services Department and serves as a critical link between the City, community-based organizations, and residents. CHWs provide harm reduction education and services to community members and businesses, support clinics at the Somerville Homeless Coalition, help residents enroll in public benefits, and offer referrals to social and health services.

For more information on the CHW Division or to request their services, email chw@somervillema.gov.



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SALES TAX HOLIDAY (S 2530 and H 4220)

By Bob Katzen

The House and Senate approved measures designating Saturday, August 9 and Sunday, August 10 as a sales tax holiday weekend for the Bay State, allowing consumers to buy most products that cost under \$2,500 without paying the state's 6.25 percent sales tax. State law currently calls for a 2-day sales tax holiday every year. This bill simply sets the specific dates.

"The sales tax holiday is a wonderful opportunity for our residents to get out into their communities, support local businesses, get their kids ready for school in fall or make a purchase that they've been putting off," said co-sponsor Sen. Adam Gómez (D-Springfield), Senate Chair of the Committee on Community Development and Small Businesses. "I am glad that our leaders here in the Legislature have been able to work

and get this done again for our residents this year, and I look forward to hearing how residents are able to make the most of the tax reprieve."

"I was proud to sponsor the legislation establishing this year's sales tax holiday that helps boost our economy and provides support and relief for our residents and small businesses," said co-sponsor Rep. Carole Fiola (D-Fall River), House Chair of the

Committee on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies. "This is an important weekend that helps bolster our economy and I applaud my colleagues in passing this legislation to provide individuals, families and businesses across the commonwealth with some relief."

"Lowering costs for Massachusetts residents and supporting local businesses is critical for our

communities in this time of economic uncertainty," said Senate President Karen Spilka (D-Ashland).

"This year's temporary suspension of the sales tax will bring consumers needed economic relief while boosting revenue for small businesses and retailers," said House Speaker Ron Mariano (D-Quincy).



ELIMINATE THE ADDRESS OF CANDIDATES ON THE BALLOT (SD 2982)

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| By Bob Katzen | the city or town in which the candidate resides to be listed. | Oliveira said that Massachusetts is “an extreme outlier” as the only state that prints candidate addresses on ballots. He noted that 44 other states list only party affiliation on a public ballot, and five list a candidate’s home | municipality, precinct or ward but not a full street address. | other, protect our staff and protect our family, and this is a step in the right direction.” |
| Sen. Jake Oliveira (D-Ludlow) proposed a late-filed bill that would remove the home street address of candidates for elected office from ballots and nomination papers. The measure would allow only | The measure was filed in response to a shooting in which Minnesota House Speaker Emerita Melissa Hortman and her husband Mark were killed. | | “Only Massachusetts includes the information that we have on our ballots,” said Oliveira. “We need to do everything that we can to protect one an- | |

EXPAND THE BOTTLE BILL (S 2245)

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| By Bob Katzen | iced tea; an increase in the deposit from 5 cents to 10 cents; an increase in the handling fees paid to retailers and redemption centers; an exemption for retailers of less than 2,000 square feet from the requirement of accepting containers for redemption; and a provision that would direct unclaimed | deposits in excess of \$70 million to the re-established Clean Environment Fund, to be used for administering the deposit system and for programs related to solid waste management and environmental protection. | the bill will modernize the bottle deposit system so that it better reflects the beverages we consume today. “By including more types of containers, raising the deposit and supporting retailers with higher handling fees ... we can recycle billions more bottles and cans each year. This will reduce | litter in our communities, slash emissions, save cities and towns millions in waste removal costs and create jobs across the state.” |
| The Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy’s hearing included a measure that would expand the bottle bill to include containers as small as nips and as large as one gallon; more types of beverages such as water, energy drinks and | | Sponsor Sen. Cindy Creem (D-Newton) said | | |

BAN OPEN CONTAINERS OF MARIJUANA IN MOTOR VEHICLES (H 186)

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|--|
| By Bob Katzen | driver possessing an open container of marijuana or marijuana-infused edibles in the passenger area of a motor vehicle — similar to the state’s open alcohol container law. The mea- | sure also creates exemptions for certain vehicles including limousines and RVs. | of creating more structure and regulation within the developing industry,” said sponsor Rep. Marcus Vaughan (R-Wrentham). “I feel while this is a great addition to the com- | monwealth’s economic standpoint there needs to be more awareness on the public health side to promote safety.” |
| The Cannabis Policy Committee held a hearing on a proposal that would establish a \$100 to \$500 civil penalty for a | | “I filed this bill with hopes | | |

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Should our Governor and Attorney General demand an investigation and do it or just conveniently slide it under a political rug to protect people in their party?

Somerville/Medford News Weekly

Boston News Group

Survey Question:

Should Governor Maura Healey and Attorney General Andrea Joy Campbell look into the murder of John O'Keefe or just let it conveniently slide under the rug?



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Your thoughts should our Governor and Attorney General demand an investigation and do it or just conveniently slide it under a political rug to protect people in their party ? If I were governor, I would demand it to be thor

oughly investigated and prosecuted!

Below is a concise five-question survey designed to gauge public opinion on whether Governor Maura Healey and Attorney General Andrea Joy Campbell

should investigate the murder of John O'Keefe, focusing on accountability, election-year dynamics, and avoiding deflections to the court system.

Accountability in the John O'Keefe Murder Case Survey

1. Need for Investigation Do you believe Governor Maura Healey and Attorney General Andrea Joy Campbell should launch an independent investigation into the murder of Boston police officer John O'Keefe to ensure justice is served?
• A) Yes, an investigation is necessary
• B No, the current legal process is sufficient
• C) Unsure

2. Election-Year Accountability How important is it for elected officials like Healey and Campbell to address high-profile cases like O'Keefe's murder transparently during an

election year?
• A) Very important
• B Somewhat important
• C) Not important
• D) Unsure

3. Party Loyalty Concerns Do you think Healey and Campbell might avoid investigating O'Keefe's case to protect political allies or party interests?
• A) Very likely
• B Somewhat likely
• C) Unlikely
• D) Unsure

4. Blaming the Court System How acceptable is it for elected officials to deflect responsibility for reviewing cases like O'Keefe's by citing limitations of the court system?
• A) Completely unacceptable
• B Somewhat acceptable
• C) Fully acceptable
• D) Unsure

5. Demanding Accountability Should the public demand that elected officials like Healey and

Campbell take action on cases like O'Keefe's without relying on excuses, regardless of political pressures?
• A) Strongly agree
• B Somewhat agree
• C) Disagree
• D) Unsure

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BAN USE OF CELL PHONES IN SCHOOLS (S 381)

By Bob Katzen

The Education Committee held a hearing on several bills which would ban student use of cell phones during classes except

when expressly directed by a teacher.

“An increasing number of countries, states and municipalities have banned mobile phones in schools,”

said Sen. John Keenan (D-Quincy) who filed one of the proposals. He noted that he filed the measure, to ensure that the commonwealth protects children in classrooms and

optimizes the learning environment for students.”

Somerville Mobile Farmers Market Returns Thursday, July 10



Mobile Market Bring Fresh, Affordable Local Produce to Locations Across the City

SOMERVILLE – Get your recipes ready, the Somerville Mobile Farmers Market returns on Thursday, July 10 for the 2025 season. The market will be open Thursdays through Saturdays, and will run through November 1.

All produce is sourced from local farms and priced affordably to make healthy, fresh food accessible to all. The mobile market accepts cash, debit and credit cards, SNAP, Fresh Connect, WIC Farmers Market Coupons, and Senior Farmers Market Coupons.

Here’s where you can find the

mobile market this summer and fall:

Thursdays, 4–6 p.m.
Clarendon Hill Towers, 1366 Broadway

Fridays, 10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.
Council on Aging, 167 Holland Street

Fridays, 2:30–4:30 p.m.
Somerville Public Library –

East Branch, 115 Broadway
Saturdays, 10 a.m.–12 p.m.
Mystic Housing Development, 25B Memorial Road

For the full schedule, weekly produce updates, and more information about programs and events, visit the market’s website at somervillemobilefarmersmarket.org.

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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 infamy 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.”

Dilboy Pool and Citywide Water Features Are Open in Somerville; Latta Pool at Foss Park Opens Saturday 6/21



SOMERVILLE— With summer temperatures here, it's a good time to plan ahead for ways to stay cool. Somerville's pools, spray decks, and other water

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More information at somervillema.myrec.com

Dilboy is a state-owned pool managed by the City of Somerville.

Latta Brothers Memorial Pool at Foss Park (235 Broadway)

Spray deck open

Pool opens for the season on Saturday, June 21

Hours:

Pool: Daily 11:15 a.m. to 6:45 p.m.

Spray Deck: Daily 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Admission is free for Massachusetts residents.

More information at mass.gov/swimming

Latta Pool is a state-owned pool managed by the state.

Somerville Parks with Water Features

All Somerville splash pads are currently open with the exception of Conway Park and Dickerson Playground.

Hours:

Water features are open 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

The water sprays are on timers and stop for 20 minutes between cycles.

Water feature information is available in multiple languages under the “Stay Cool Outside” section of the City’s Keeping Cool webpage at somervillema.gov/KeepCool.

For more heat safety tips and information, visit somervillema.gov/keepcool.

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Join The Somerville Blessing Boxes Group



Somerville Blessing Boxes are located at Union Square Plaza and Statue Park Davis Square
Give what you can, Take what you need
Check us out Somerville Blessing Boxes on Facebook and please join the group!
The outpour of support of donations that have been coming in of much needed supplies of foods, hygienic items and warm clothing from the generous people of Somerville is overwhelming.
Its up to all of us to help when we can to make a difference in the lives of others especially in those of the

homeless and less fortunate.
A “Somerville Blessing Boxes” Facebook page has been established keep everyone updated on donations and the Blessing Boxes inventory status. Please feel free to join the page and follow all the good that is being done everyday by the good people of Somerville.
One blessing box is located at Statue Park in Davis Square and the other is located at Union Square, Plaza in Union Square.
“Give what you can, Take what you need.”
Much thanks and appreciation,
Frank Santangelo

Blessing Backpack Checklist

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| <p>BASICS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Wool beanie (hat) <input type="checkbox"/> Smart wool socks <input type="checkbox"/> Gloves <input type="checkbox"/> Scarf <p>FOOD & DRINK</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Quality instant coffee <input type="checkbox"/> Tea <input type="checkbox"/> Energy drink <input type="checkbox"/> Beef jerky <input type="checkbox"/> Dried fruit <input type="checkbox"/> Fruit leathers <input type="checkbox"/> Trail mix <input type="checkbox"/> Nuts <input type="checkbox"/> Granola bars <input type="checkbox"/> Protein powder packets <input type="checkbox"/> Restaurant gift cards <p>HELP THEM CONNECT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Journal & pen <input type="checkbox"/> Stationary <input type="checkbox"/> Stamps <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-paid phone card | <p>TOILETRIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-purpose wipes <input type="checkbox"/> Chapstick <input type="checkbox"/> Facial wipes <input type="checkbox"/> Moisturizer <input type="checkbox"/> Comb <input type="checkbox"/> Toothbrush & tooth paste <input type="checkbox"/> Grooming kit <p>SURVIVAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> First aid kit <input type="checkbox"/> Water bottle with built in filter <input type="checkbox"/> Heat-pack <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-purpose tool <p>TREATS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Chocolates <input type="checkbox"/> Fruit snacks <input type="checkbox"/> Cookie snack packs <input type="checkbox"/> Candy (individually wrapped) <input type="checkbox"/> Mints <input type="checkbox"/> Chewing gum <p>SPLURGE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Starbucks gift card <input type="checkbox"/> Compact reusable bag |
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\$1.3 BILLION FOR TRANSPORTATION AND EDUCATION (H 4227)



By Bob Katzen

House 150-3, then 148-4, Senate 40-0, approved and sent to Gov. Maura Healey the conference committee version of a \$1.3 billion fiscal 2025 supplemental budget that uses funds generated from the surtax imposed on taxpayers' earnings of more than \$1 million annually, to fund \$593 million for education-related projects and \$716 million for transportation-related ones. The House and Senate had approved different versions of the bill and the conference committee drafted this compromise version.

The surtax was created by voters in November 2022 when they voted for a constitutional amendment, dubbed by supporters as the "Fair Share Amendment," that allows a graduated income tax in Massachusetts and imposes an additional 4 percent income tax, in addition to the flat 5 percent one, on taxpayers' earnings of more than \$1 million annually. Language in the constitutional amendment requires that "subject to

appropriation, the revenue will go to fund quality public education, affordable public colleges and universities, and for the repair and maintenance of roads, bridges and public transportation."

A total of \$535 million of the \$716 million for transportation will be used for various MBTA projects. Other provisions include \$80 million for Chapter 90 aid to ensure every city and town receives funding to maintain local roads and bridges; \$16.4 million for municipally owned small bridges and culverts; \$7 million for the improvement and maintenance of unpaved roads; and \$5 million for transportation improvements associated with the upcoming 2026 FIFA World Cup.

The \$593 million for education includes \$248 million for special education; \$115 million for public higher education infrastructure investments; \$25 million for tutoring to support accelerated literacy growth and success for students in kindergarten through grade 3; \$10 million for English Language Learning Programs;

\$10 million to support the Holocaust Museum in Boston; and \$10 million for grants to eligible local school districts for clean energy infrastructure improvements and upgrades.

"Ensuring that every Massachusetts resident has access to a safe and reliable public transportation system, and that every student in the commonwealth receives a high-quality education, are two of the most fundamental responsibilities that we have as elected officials," said House Speaker Ron Mariano (D-Quincy). "The investments being made in this supplemental budget are representative of the Legislature's continued focus on meeting those responsibilities."

"In a time of national turbulence and damaging federal cuts, the conference committee has delivered a meaningful compromise that honors the will of Massachusetts voters and invests Fair Share funds equitably across Massachusetts," said Sen. Jo Comerford (D-Northampton), Vice Chair of the Senate Ways and Means Committee. "This supplemental budget reflects a Senate commitment to regional equity—providing meaningful support for K-12 schools grappling with strained budgets, addressing long-overdue maintenance on public higher education campuses and delivering much-needed transportation solutions for communities across the commonwealth."

"As a member of the joint conference committee, I'm proud to have played a significant role in the process that reflects the values and priorities of communities, such as those on the South Shore that I

represent," said Sen. Patrick O'Connor (R-Weymouth), Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means. "This legislation directs historic and groundbreaking Fair Share investments toward career and technical education, local infrastructure and regional transportation, which directly benefits our schools, our roads and our economy."

Reps. Ken Sweezey (R-Duxbury) and Alyson Sullivan Almeida (R-Abington) cast the only two votes against the budget. They issued a joint press release citing the conference committee's decision to withhold \$80 million in Chapter 90 road funding from municipalities deemed non-compliant with the MBTA Communities Act's zoning mandates, as the reason they voted against the budget.

The MBTA Communities Act, according to the state's website, requires that an MBTA community "must have at least one zoning district of reasonable size in which multi-family housing is permitted as of right and meets other criteria" including minimum gross density of 15 units per acre; and a location not more than 1/2 mile from a commuter rail station, subway station, ferry terminal or bus station. No age restrictions can be applied and the district must be suitable for families with children

Sweezey, whose district includes several non-compliant towns said, "Three of my [district's] towns – Marshfield, Halifax and Hanson – are being penalized for standing by their local planning boards and residents. The conference committee claims it wants to support our communi-

ties, yet it is holding critical transportation funds hostage. That is simply not acceptable."

"I was fully prepared to support the final compromise," said Sullivan-Almeida. "Unfortunately, the conference committee inserted a last-minute stipulation to punish non-compliant towns. This kind of maneuvering doesn't belong in a budget that is supposed to help all our cities and towns."

Both legislators emphasized their support for the provisions in the supplemental budget that increase funding for education including regional transportation, career technical training and special education as well as provisions for public transit. However, they were clear that they could not support a bill that "leverages essential local funding to coerce compliance with a controversial zoning mandate."

(A "Yes" vote is for the budget. A "No" vote is against it. The House voted twice on this bill so there are two votes listed for each representative.)

Rep. Christine Barber Yes/Yes Rep. Mike Connolly Yes/Yes Rep. Paul Donato Yes/Yes Rep. Erika Uytterhoeven Yes/Yes Sen. Patricia Jehlen Yes

\$800,000 FOR BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS (S 3)

By Bob Katzen

Senate 39-0, approved an amendment increasing funding for Boys and Girls Clubs by \$800,000 (from \$2.2 million to \$3 million.)

"This funding will support

the Boys and Girls Club's mission of assuring that success is within reach of every young person by providing a safe environment and social, academic and health services that club members may not otherwise receive," said amendment sponsor Sen.

Edward Kennedy (D-Lowell).

(A "Yes" vote is for the \$800,000.)

Sen. Patricia Jehlen Yes

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\$532 MILLION FISCAL 2025 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET (S 2529)

By Bob Katzen

Senate 38-2, approved a \$532 million fiscal 2025 supplemental budget that includes \$174 million for fiscally strained acute care hospitals and \$35 million for community health centers facing financial challenges. The House has already approved a different version of the bill and a House-Senate conference committee will eventually draft a compromise version.

Other provisions in the Senate version include \$134 million for the Medical Assistance Trust Fund; \$400,000 for Women Infants and Children Program

Manufacturer Rebates; \$60 million for Home Care Services; \$35 million for payments to fiscally strained community health centers; \$42.9 million for Residential Assistance for Families in Transition; \$4.2 million for the State Police Crime Laboratory; and \$60 million for Home Care Services.

“Massachusetts has a health-care ecosystem that is the envy of other states, and that doesn’t happen by accident,” said Senate President Karen Spilka (D-Ashland). “Supporting every resident is part of what it means to be a leader in healthcare access. This funding will help our hospitals and commu-

nity health centers provide high-quality care in every region, no matter a patient’s insurance status, as well as provide critical services to our veterans, seniors and municipalities.”

“The Senate took action today on reconciling deficiencies of \$532 million in the fiscal year 2025 budget, most notably providing \$209 million in critical assistance to fiscally strained acute care hospitals and community health centers,” said Sen. Mike Rodrigues (D-Westport), Chair of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means. “The bill also allocates \$134 million to the Medical Assistance Trust

Fund, with the remaining \$189 million to responsible bill-paying obligations across a broad range of state agencies and programs. We’re fortunate that the commonwealth is in strong financial condition to meet these responsibilities, never more important than now in these continuing uncertain times.”

“My primary reason for voting no on this supplemental budget is that it includes a policy initiative allowing electric utility providers to increase rates to seemingly expand electric charging stations, and does so without requiring a response from the Department of Public

Utility which oversees these rate hikes,” said Sen. Ryan Fattman (R-Sutton). “When the final bill is negotiated, I hope this is removed, thus allowing me to support it. Rate payers are being hit every which way, and I simply will not support more cost increases on families for higher electric rates, or subsidies for electric vehicle infrastructure when the market doesn’t support it.”

(A “Yes” vote is for the \$532 million supplemental budget. A “No” vote is against it.)

Sen. Patricia Jehlen Yes

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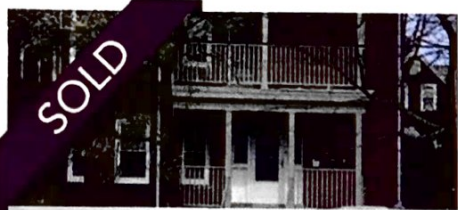
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Harvard Square - 6 Family - \$3.4M



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