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VOL.1 NO.329-2987

SOMERVILLE/MEDFORD MASS

Tuesday April 14th, 2026

CANNABIS REGULATION CHANGES



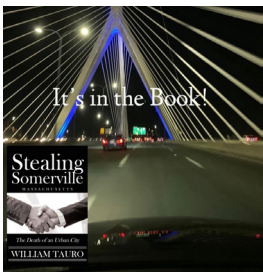
Continued to page 5



NEWS TALK OUT
LOUD/SPEAK UP



Somerville Police
Real Life Somerville
Police Stories Page



Somerville Invites Neighbors to Roll Up Their Sleeves for Spring Cleanups



Continued to page 11

Congratulations to Medford Police Department's New Officers!

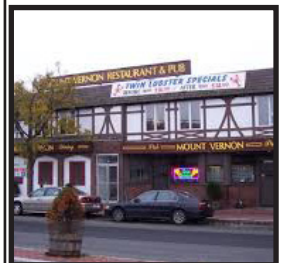


Continued to page 13



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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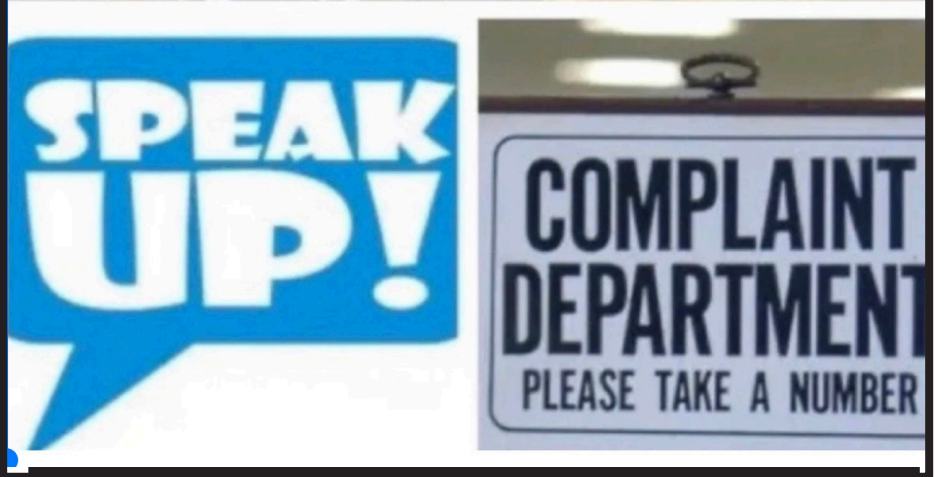
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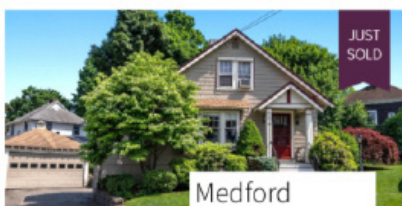
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MARKET ACTIVITY

WE HAVE BEEN BUSY...

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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!

Helen Praysman Broker Associate REALTOR®
(617) 610-5382 Helen.Praysman@commonmoves.com

Patricia Ng Broker Associate
REALTOR®-(617) 818-5736 Patricia.Ng@commonmoves.com

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Winner of the 2020 Chairman's Circle Gold award, representing the top 2% in Berkshire Hathaway Home Services across the nation



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Please send both form and payment to:

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 489 Winthrop Street
 Medford, MA 02155

If you have any questions email us at MHSVarsitySoftball22@gmail.com

MHS Varsity Softball is a non-profit organization in affiliation with Medford High School, our tax ID is listed below for your records.
 Tax ID 04-6601400

Artwork / Logos must be submitted to MHSVarsitySoftball22@gmail.com
 Deadline for artwork / logos is March 7th for full season exposure, any late submission banners will be hung starting tournament weekend.

Become A Medford Police Officer



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APPLICATION DEADLINE
 FEBRUARY 2, 2026

NOTICES TO APPEAR
 FEBRUARY 20, 2026

WRITTEN EXAM PERIOD
 MARCH 11-14, 2026

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In January 2025, the Civil Service introduced a new 'Hybrid Hiring Model' for departments under its purview. This model offers two distinct pathways to become an entry-level police officer:

1. Civil Service Exam Route: The first step in this pathway is taking the Massachusetts Civil Service Exam, which is now offered twice a year. Applications are NOW OPEN for the spring 2026 police officer entrance exam. Deadline to apply is February 2, 2026.
2. Getbadged Route: Apply directly through GetBadged.com. Visit GetBadged.com, create an account, and select your preferred exam date. This is on-going.

For more details and the next steps in the new hiring process, please visit our website at medfordpolice.com/becomeapoliceofficer.

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Somerville/Medford Remembering Anthony Caliri



Anthony Caliri, Retired(1993-2007)- Human Resource Director of Somerville Public Schools

Anthony "Tony" Caliri, 78, of Acton, Massachusetts, passed away on April 10, 2026.

Tony grew up in Somerville, Massachusetts, and spent much of his adult life in Tewksbury, Chelmsford, and Acton, as well as summering at Newfound Lake in New Hampshire. A lifelong educator and leader, he dedicated over 30 years to public education, leaving a lasting impact on generations of students and colleagues. Tony began his career as a classroom teacher in Somerville, where he taught business and marketing for 22 years. He is credited with starting the DECA program at Somerville High School, supporting hundreds of students as they pursued their

dreams in business and marketing. After a period serving as Human Resources Director at Somerville Lumber, he returned to Somerville Public Schools, where he continued his work in human resources until his retirement. Throughout his career, Tony remained deeply committed to schools and students, always believing in the power of education to change the trajectory of young people's lives. As a proud Double-Eagle, Tony's passion for all things Boston College Athletics was only matched by his lifelong love of sports. That passion made him a memorable presence in his community. He loved umpiring Little League baseball. It gave him the chance to be around kids, using his booming voice and large personality to have a little fun on the field and remind the kids even during the toughest times to smile. On the rare occasions when he

wasn't at Alumni Stadium watching a BC football game or playing cribbage with his friends and family, he spent his time coaching high school and youth sports, and serving as a public address announcer for Highlanders football, basketball, and hockey games. Everyone knew Tony wherever he went. He had a presence that filled any room. Above all, Tony was devoted to his family. He believed deeply in his role as a husband, father, and provider, and took great pride in the life he built with those he loved. Tony is survived by his wife, Janet; his son, Charlie, and daughter-in-law, Sarah; his daughter, Amy; and his three grandchildren, Matthew, Michael, and Emma. He will be remembered for his personality, his voice, his presence, his sarcastic wit and humor, and his unwavering commitment to both family and children.

In accordance with Tony's wishes, there will be no wake or funeral services. A celebration of life may be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Tony's memory to Gateway Arts online at <https://gatewayarts.org/donate>; or by check at Vinfen/Gateway Arts c/o Nick Kane, 15 Station Street, Brookline, MA 02445. To leave a message or share a memory please visit <http://www.kellycremation.com> https://www.kellycremation.com/obituaries/anthony-caliri?ttm_pid=211231249&ttm_affiliate=legacy-pro&ttm_affiliatetype=standard&ttm_campaign=legacya

NO UNFUNDED MANDATES (H 5349)

By Bob Katzen

NO UNFUNDED MANDATES (H 5349) House 27-136 rejected an amendment that would exempt any school district from paying any additional costs for implementing the provisions of the social media/cell phone legislation approved by the House. The amendment would allow the districts to pay for the additional cost only if they want to do so.

Rep. Kevin Sweezy (R-Duxbury), the sponsor of the amendment, said it is important to note that when we give authority to agencies to create regulation for our cities and towns, it often comes with a cost. Even if it doesn't have dollars and cents in the line items, it can still end up costing municipal budgets. He argued that the amendment simply ensures that no policy made by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education incurs

a cost for cities and towns and negatively impact our school districts. "Cities and towns across the state are struggling with rising costs and increasing budget constraints, with more and more communities being forced to pursue Proposition 2 1/2 overrides to preserve essential municipal services," said co-sponsor House Minority Leader Rep. Brad Jones (R-North Reading). "Given the potential costs associat-

ed with implementing this bill, this amendment would help to ensure that we are not placing an additional financial burden on our cities and towns by imposing an unfunded mandate at the local level." Rep. Ken Gordon (D-Bedford) opposed the amendment and said that nothing in the bill calls for a district to spend a penny. He noted that if a district wants to, it can tell the students to simply not bring their cell phones to

school. There's no requirement they get the pouches or anything else and spend the money. (A "Yes" vote is for the amendment. A "No" vote is against it.) Rep. Christine Barber No Rep. Mike Connolly No Rep. Paul Donato No Rep. Erika Uytterhoeven No

Somerville/Medford Remembering Tracy Lee Desmond



Tracy Lee Desmond was born on December 1, 1964, and passed away peacefully on April 11, 2026. She will be lovingly remembered for her warm heart, gentle spirit, and the joy she brought to those around her. Tracy's kindness and unwavering love for her family and friends left a lasting impression on all who had the privilege of knowing her.

She is survived by her devoted husband, William

Desmond; her beloved daughters, Téa Desmond and Kerri Gentzs (Desmond); her cherished grandchild, Kayden Gentzs; and her special friends, too numerous to mention. Tracy's presence in their lives was a source of strength, comfort, and endless love.

A Celebration of Life in honor of Tracy will be held on Saturday, April 18, 2026, at Ziggy's, 5088 Estate Solitude, Christiansted, Virgin

Islands 00820, beginning at 3:00 p.m. Family, friends and everyone who shared a part of Tracy are invited to gather, share memories, and celebrate the beautiful life she lived.

Tracy Lee Desmond will be deeply missed and forever remembered in the hearts of her family and all who loved her.

Somerville/Medford Remembering Agnes R. (Strange) Spinney



SPINNEY, Agnes R. (Strange) Of Billerica, formerly of Brookline passed away peacefully on September 5, 2025. Beloved wife of the late Paul B. Spinney. Loving mother of Linda Bergantino and her late husband Robert, Paul B. Spinney, Jr. and his wife Rhonda and Glenn N. Spinney and his fiancé Simone Spinney.

Adored grandmother of Tori Bergantino and her husband Tom McKinnon and Madilyn Aubrey. Devoted daughter of the late David and Erna Strange. Dear sister of the late David Strange, Jr. and John Strange. Also survived by several nieces and nephews. In keeping with Agnes' wishes, funeral services were private. If desired

contributions in memory of Agnes may be made to The Carroll School for the Blind, 770 Centre St., Newton, MA. 02458





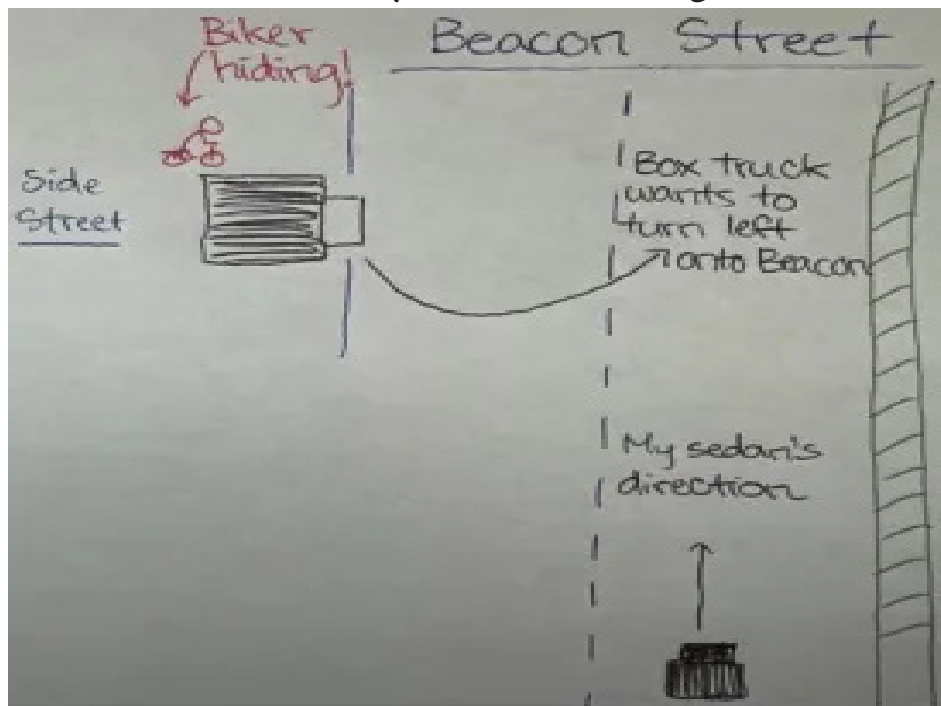
Somerville/Medford News Weekly Speakup Line: Unpopular opinion: some bikers are actually reckless Biking

Dear Billy T and Somerville/Medford News Weekly Speakup Line,

I'm driving down Beacon Street one night, trying to get home after work, going the speed limit. I see the road up ahead that a box truck is turning left onto Beacon from a side street. There is a normal amount of space that I'm between and the truck. All of sudden, a biker comes swinging out from the truck's back left side. He is trying

to cut from the backside of the truck towards the bike lane.

Guys got no lights, no reflective clothing, no helmet, nothing. I literally couldn't see him until the last second, so I slam on my brakes so I don't hit him. Then he flips me off like I did something wrong?
Extra: I've included drawings (not drawn to scale or detailed) to better show the commotion.



CANNABIS REGULATION CHANGES (H 5350)



By Bob Katzen

House 155-0, Senate 33-6, approved and sent to Gov. Maura Healey a conference committee version of a bill that would restructure the Cannabis Control Commission (CCC) — dissolving it and downsizing its membership from five members to three. It also gives all the power to the governor to make the three appointments, replacing the current law which gives that power to the governor, the attorney general and treasurer.

The House and Senate had approved different versions of the measure and a conference committee was appointed in December 2025 and took more than three months to hammer out this compromise version.

Other provisions include making it clear that the CCC chair is responsible for personnel and administrative matters and the executive director reports directly to the chair; an increase from one ounce to two ounces in the amount of marijuana that an adult can purchase or possess for recreational use; increasing from three to six the number of licenses a business owner can hold; allowing medical marijuana operators to specialize in cultivation, manufacturing or retail sales by eliminating current costly requirements; directing the CCC to study and make recommendations for the regulation of intoxicating hemp, which has grown in prevalence over recent years and will effectively be banned under federal law this fall unless the U.S. Congress takes action; and giving the CCC the ability to allow retailers to advertise sales, discounts and customer loyalty

programs inside the store and via opt-in email, both of which are currently not permitted.

“Massachusetts has one of the most established cannabis industries in the country, and our laws need to evolve with that reality,” said Sen. Adam Gomez (D-Springfield), Senate Chair of the Committee on Cannabis Policy and co-chair of the conference committee. “This legislation strengthens oversight of the Cannabis Control Commission while making smart updates that support small businesses, improve accountability and ensure consumers can access cannabis safely and legally. By modernizing license caps, clarifying delivery and advertising rules and increasing transparency across the industry, we are building a more stable, equitable and responsible cannabis marketplace for the commonwealth.”

“This bill takes clear steps towards a safer and more equitable cannabis industry across the commonwealth,” said Rep. Daniel Donahue (D-Worcester), House Chair of the Committee

on Cannabis Policy and co-chair of the conference committee. “It also restructures and clarifies roles within the CCC to promote a more effective and accountable regulating body. This action demonstrates that the House and Legislature remain committed to ensuring that the rapidly changing Massachusetts cannabis industry continues to thrive.”

“This bill ensures that as the cannabis industry grows in Massachusetts, it expands opportunity and reflects our values,” said Senate President Karen Spilka (D-Ashland). “It opens doors for those long left out, modernizes access to safe and legal cannabis and brings our laws in line with a maturing industry. The result is a more stable, fair and equitable marketplace that keeps public health and safety front and center.”

“We should work to ensure the cannabis industry operates responsibly and safely,” said Sen. John Keenan (D-Quincy) who voted against the measure. “I would have liked to see [the bill] put greater emphasis

on creating sufficient guardrails to mitigate the potential negative public health outcomes related to a sharp increase in cannabis accessibility. I also advocated for more education on public and mental health risks of cannabis consumption. Constituents have shared with me how cannabis has negatively impacted their lives. With them in mind, I voted against the bill.”

None of the other five senators who voted against the bill responded to repeated attempts by Beacon Hill Roll Call asking them to comment on the bill's passage and to explain why they voted against it. Those five senators are Sens. Kelly Dooner (R-Taunton); Ryan Fattman (R-Sutton); Mark Montigny (D-New Bedford), Patrick O'Connor (R-Weymouth) and Bruce Tarr (R-Gloucester).

(A “Yes” vote is for the bill. A “No” vote is against it.)

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

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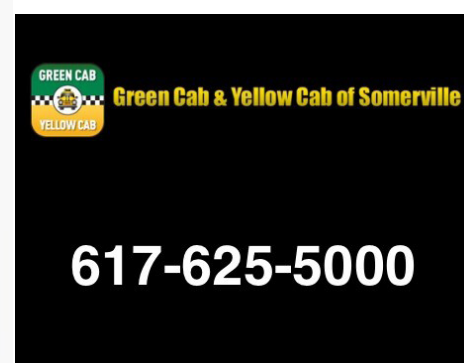
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TAX EXEMPTIONS (S 3029)

By Bob Katzen

Senate 38-0, approved an amendment that would allow cities and towns to give temporary property tax breaks to farmers for building new buildings and/or renovating structures that are essential to farming – including barns, stor-

age facilities, worker housing structures and structures used as indoor arenas for training and exercising horses that are used to help on the farm. The tax exemption applies only to the added value from new or rebuilt buildings and is valid for five years. If the building is used for non-agricultural purposes

prior to the 5-year period, the owner would be required to pay back the taxes that were exempt.

“This measure provides our farmers with the support they need to invest in their operations without being immediately burdened by higher prop-

erty taxes,” said Sen. Patrick O’Connor (R-Weymouth). “By offering targeted, temporary relief, we’re helping to sustain local agriculture and protect working lands. This is a practical step toward strengthening food security and the economy.”

Amendment sponsor Sen.

Bruce Tarr (R-Gloucester) did not respond to repeated requests from Beacon Hill Roll Call asking him to comment on his amendment and its passage.

(A “Yes” vote is for the amendment.)

Sen. Patricia Jehlen Yes

Somerville Community Invited to Take First Look at Proposals for 90 Washington St.



SOMERVILLE – Somerville community members are invited to take a first look and provide public comment on proposals to redevelop 90 Washington

Street, a nearly four-acre site near the East Somerville Green Line station. At the public meeting of the 90 Washington Street Civic Advisory Committee (CAC) on Tuesday, April 22, from 5:30-7 p.m., CAC members will review and share input on the recently received proposals and will also welcome feedback on the proposals from members of the public.

“Decisions like this shape the future of our city for decades,” said Mayor Jake Wilson. “I’ll be there, and I hope residents will join me. Come take a look at what’s being proposed, ask questions, and tell us what matters to you. The more we hear from the community

now, the better this project will be.”

Following the April 10 proposal deadline, submitted concepts will begin moving through a public review process. The April 22 meeting is an early opportunity for community members to learn about proposals, ask questions, and help shape the future of one of the city’s largest redevelopment sites. Proposals are expected to be available to review on Friday, April 17, at somervillema.gov/90-washington-redevelopment.

Meeting Details
What: 90 Washington Street Proposal Review Community Meeting

When: Tuesday, April 22, 5:30-7 p.m.
Where: Zoom Webinar

About the 90 Washington St Request for Proposals (RFP)
The City is seeking a mixed-use project that delivers new housing, active ground-floor spaces, and publicly accessible open space, while helping recoup the City’s approximately \$39 million public investment in the site. Proposals will be reviewed by the SRA, City Council, and the 90 Washington Street CAC, with a development partner expected to be selected in July.

About the CAC
The 90 Washington Street CAC is a

City-convened group composed of residents, local employees, and neighborhood stakeholders that was established to provide structured community input throughout site planning and redevelopment. This CAC structure is used across projects involving the SRA.

To learn more, visit somervillema.gov/90-washington-redevelopment.

PROTECT RIGHTS OF HOMELESS INDIVIDUALS (H 4783)

By Bob Katzen

The Judiciary Committee held a public hearing on legislation that would prevent the punishment of individuals experiencing homelessness for conducting life-sustaining activities on public property when no shelter is available. The measure also prohibits discrimination in the use of public areas based solely on housing status and affirms rights

such as the right to practice faith and the right against unreasonable search and seizure for individuals experiencing homelessness in public areas.

“I filed this bill in response to the U.S. Supreme Court’s 2024 Johnson v. Grants Pass decision, which allowed communities to penalize people for life-sustaining activities in public when no alternatives ex-

ist,” said sponsor Rep. Lindsay Sabadosa (D-Northampton). “These policies effectively criminalize homelessness, impose burdensome fines and make it harder for people to secure stable housing, without improving public health or safety. Our approach prioritizes directing resources toward real public safety needs and lasting housing solutions.”



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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and absolutely worth checking them out!” Somerville/Medford News Weekly/Boston News Group

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dia 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

Thank you for your continued support.



Somerville Marks 'Start by Believing Day' to Support Survivors



SOMERVILLE—Mayor Jake Wilson has signed a proclamation supporting the City's annual observance of "Start by Believing Day" in Somerville on the first Wednesday in April, recognizing the importance of believing survivors of sexual violence and strengthening community response.

The proclamation highlights the critical role that friends, family members, and community members play when survivors first come forward, noting that victims are far more likely to disclose assaults to someone they know rather than law enforcement. It also underscores

the need for compassionate, informed responses that connect survivors to support and resources.

The "Start By Believing" campaign is a global initiative led by End Violence Against Women International (EVAWI) to transform the way society

responds to sexual assault. In Somerville, City departments and community organizations are joining together to take the pledge and support a cultural shift that prioritizes survivor support.

Somerville/Medford News Weekly Speakup Line: Can a landlord upcharge for number of roommates? Advice Needed

Dear Billy T and Somerville/Medford News Weekly Speakup Line, Just toured a 3 bedroom house in Cambridge and the agent said there might be a \$200-250 rent in-

crease since there's 4 of us moving in. We are one couple, plus two friends (hence the three bedrooms). This seems unreasonable to me considering the house is

3 floors and could easily house a family of 4+. Is this allowed or can I argue it?



HEALTHCARE FOR STATE WORKERS (H 5348)

By Bob Katzen

The House and Senate approved and sent to Gov. Maura Healey a bill that would provide \$300 million for health insurance coverage for the 460,000 public employees, retirees and dependents who access health care through the state's Group Insurance

Commission. Supporters said that these additional funds are necessary because of higher-than-anticipated utilization and pharmaceutical expenses. "Health care is a fundamental promise we make to the public employees, retirees and families who keep our commonwealth running,"

said Senate President Karen Spilka (D-Ashland). "Today the Legislature acted together to ensure that more than 460,000 people can continue to access the care they rely on without disruption." "Given that hundreds of thousands of Massachusetts residents access their health care through the Group

Insurance Commission, ensuring that it is adequately funded is of vital importance," said House Speaker Ron Mariano (D-Quincy). "With the swift passage of this mini supplemental budget, the Legislature is prioritizing access to vital health care for state employees and doing our due diligence,

paying providers on time for the health care services our residents depend on," said Sen. Mike Rodrigues (D-Westport), chair of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means. "I look forward to the governor's quick and decisive action on this bill."

ALCOHOL DONATIONS FOR CHARITIES (H 442)

By Bob Katzen

The House approved and sent to the Senate legislation that would allow local licensing authorities to issue temporary licenses to charities in order for the charities to accept donations of wine, beer and alcohol for their charitable events. These

licenses were previously allowed under 1997 legislation, but the authorization has since expired. "Today, more than ever, nonprofits are in need of charitable donations to stay afloat," said sponsor Rep. Joan Meschino (D-Hull). "This bill would allow for

safe and regulated alcohol licensure for nonprofits in order to raise revenue at charity events by partnering with alcohol manufacturers, wholesalers or retailers. This bill was brought to me by Deborah Goldberg, the Treasurer and Receiver General, and has her full support."



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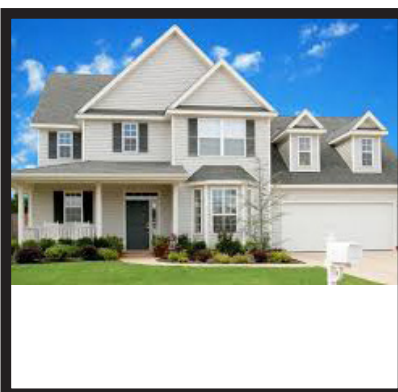
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Out dosage continued from page 2



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Class Action Lawsuit Regarding Fraudulent and Inaccurate Somerville Water Bills

By William Tauro

We are looking for residents interested to being part of a class action lawsuit to help Somerville home owners, property owners, residents and tenants to obtain the justice they deserve after being victims of fraudulent and/or inaccurate outrageously high water bills caused by faulty water meters and

inaccurate readings.

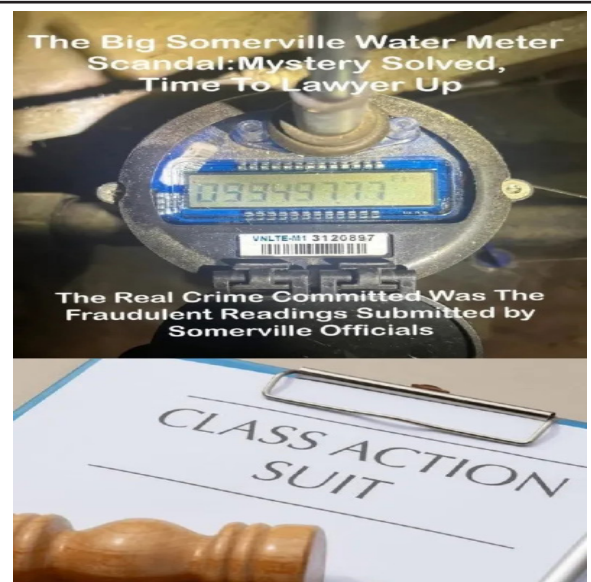
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Please feel free to message me or email me at Wm-tauro@aol.com with any inquiries about joining the list of potential plaintiffs in this class action lawsuit.





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Somerville Firefighters Local 76 News Updates

Somerville Firefighters Local 76 is proud to share that Engine 1 and Engine 3 are back in full service.

We want to extend our sincere thanks to our two mechanics, whose hard work, skill, and dedication make this possible. They continue to work diligently behind the scenes to put, and keep, our apparatus on the road, ensuring we're ready to respond when our community needs us most.

We remain hopeful that conditions will improve in the future to help prevent the frequent damage that our trucks endure, leading to them consistently being replaced out of service.



STRENGTHEN MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

By Bob Katzen

The Healey Administration announced it is soliciting innovative ideas from educators, providers and community partners on how to strengthen mental health support for Bay State students, from birth through higher education.

The administration seeks this input while it is currently developing a framework that will guide a coordinated statewide strategy to strengthen mental health support in Massachusetts, improving alignment among early education providers, K-12 schools, higher education institutions, families and community-based service systems.

"This is an opportunity for

practitioners, community organizations, researchers and educators to help shape the future of student mental health in Massachusetts," said Education Secretary Stephen Zrike. "We are looking for bold, thoughtful ideas that are grounded in evidence, centered in equity and built to last."

"Supporting mental and behavioral health from the earliest years is essential to helping every learner thrive," said Early Education and Care Commissioner Amy Kershaw. "We know that strong early foundations are critical, and we're proud to be part of this statewide effort to align partners and systems. By working together and inviting new ideas, we can build a more connected, responsive ap-

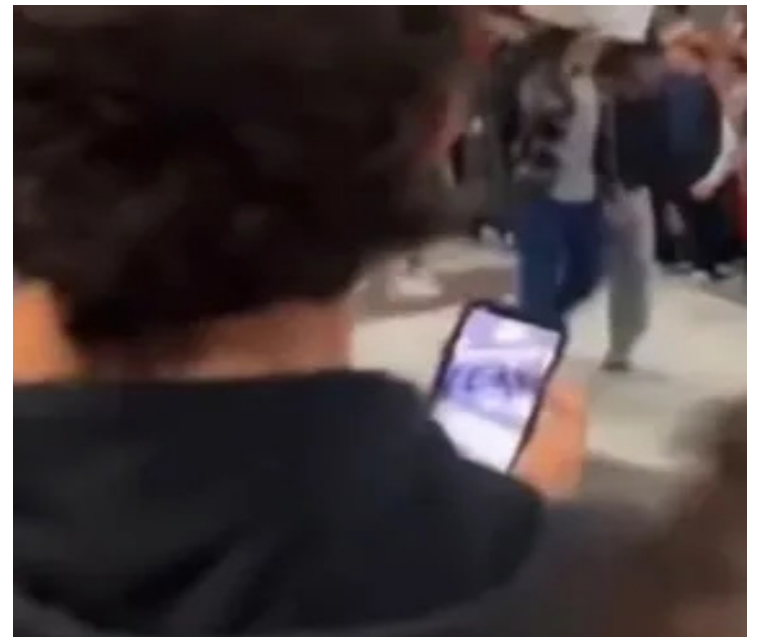
proach that supports children, families and educators across Massachusetts."

"This administration is committed to supporting the mental health of students of all ages," said Elementary and Secondary Education Commissioner Pedro Martinez. "Developing a statewide framework for mental and behavioral health will allow us to better align and integrate supports throughout students' educational journey"

"Strong mental health support should be a throughline in a student's educational journey," said Higher Education Commissioner Noe Ortega. "I look forward to the commonwealth establishing a cohesive approach that will support students' mental health needs

not only when they arrive at college, but well before."

For more information and to learn how to submit an idea, go to <http://www.commbuys.com/bsol>



Congratulations to Medford Police Department's New Officers!

Today, we proudly welcomed three new officers to our department. Officers Jordan Manning, Jaret Botelho, and Maria Mariano-Dolhopiaty graduated from the NECC Police Academy in Haverhill.

The officers will now begin a 12-week field training program as they transition into their new roles serving our community. Please join us in congratulating and warmly welcoming Officers Manning, Botelho, and Mariano-Dolhopiaty!





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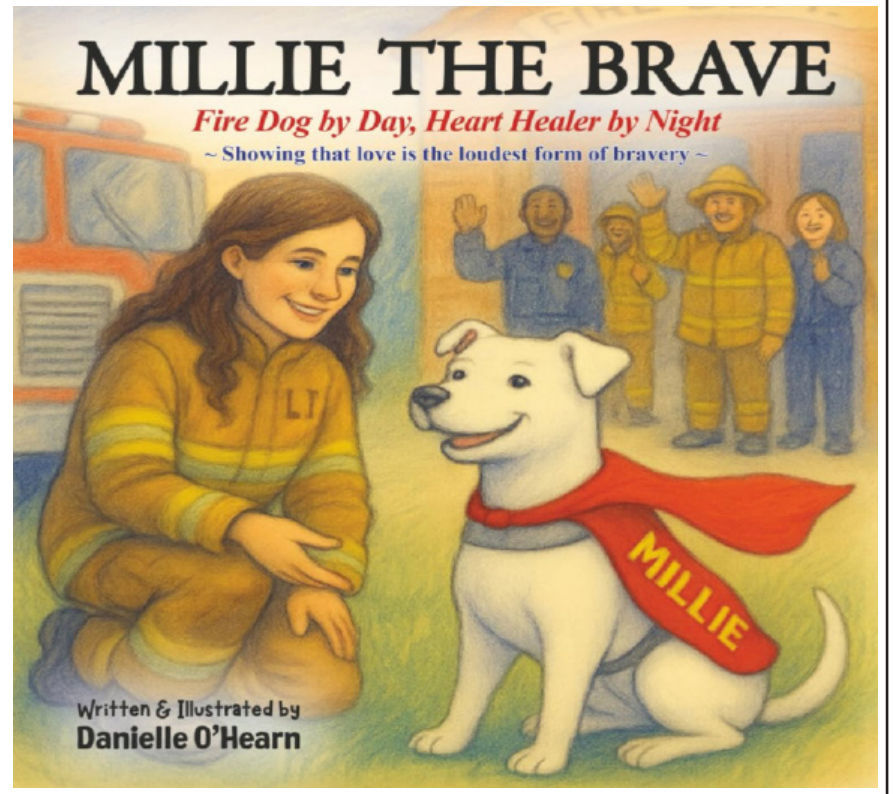
Dear Billy T and Somerville/Medford News Weekly Speakup Line,

Hey Billy
 My name is Danielle we've met a few times before, I'm a firefighter in Somerville. I just came out with a children's book.

It's about my dog Millie it was a real life, first responder therapy, dog and rescue and her adventures in firefighting and being a therapy dog. I know you have a huge following. Any shout out about the book would be greatly appreciated. It's available currently on Amazon and hopefully in bookstore soon. Thanks Billy!

Here's the link the title is Millie the brave

<https://a.co/d/9cCS8Lp>

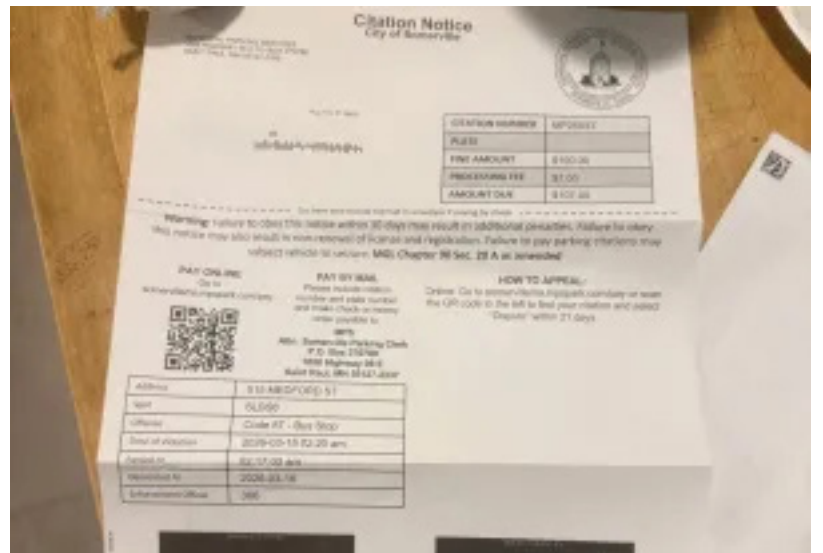


Somerville/Medford News Weekly Speakup Line: Fake Somerville Bills

Dear Billy T and Somerville/Medford News Weekly Speakup Line,

Billy, please post this in your news paper and online. A Somerville resident received this notice in the mail.

It's almost believable with the exception of the payment address, the photo is incorrectly poised. Please warn residents to ignore this fake notice it's a scam. If you can highlight the areas that prove it's fraud



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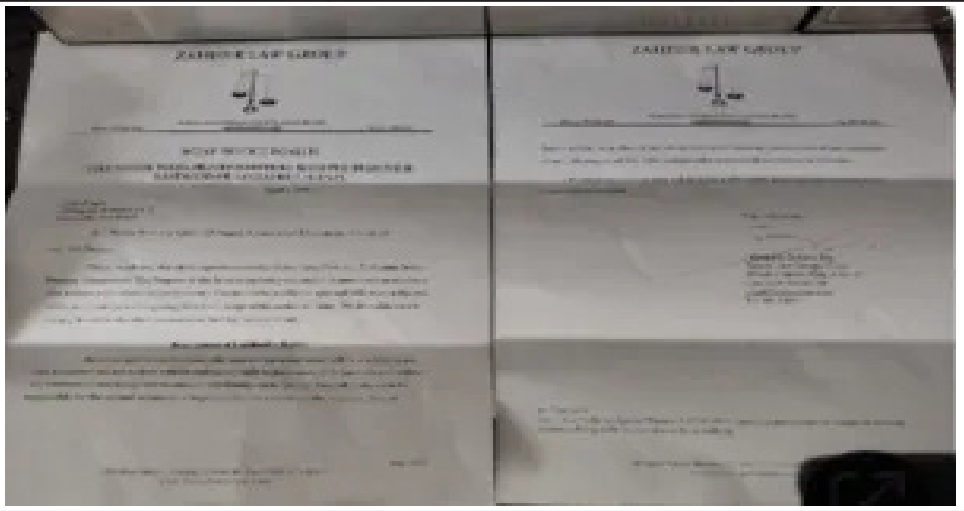
Somerville/Medford News Weekly Speakup Line: Gary Rogers Case Still Making Headlines

Dear Billy T and Somerville/Medford News Weekly Speakup Line,

I thought that you might be interested in this situation where you wrote about it previously?

“Gary Rogers served notice to quit, says “I’m a fighter” New for Cambridge Day: less than a week after a court

victory allowed him to stay in his Somerville apartment, Gary Rogers, who faced eviction for refusing to pay a 90% rent hike, may have to leave his unit by the end of May. His landlord, Ryan Pinto, has served him a new notice to quit, this one with a reservation of rights to accept payments Rogers makes as “use and occupancy,” not rent.” -Barry



PROTECT MASSACHUSETTS RESIDENTS FROM FEDERAL GOVERNMENT VIOLATIONS (S 2976)



By Bob Katzen

The Judiciary Committee held a public hearing on a bill that supporters say will protect Bay State residents from direct actions by federal law enforcement that violate individual protections under the United States Constitution. Under the proposal, a person who subjects

a resident of Massachusetts to the deprivation of any rights, privileges or immunities secured by the constitution would be liable to the injured party.

“Over the past few weeks, federal agents have brutalized people on the streets of Minneapolis,” said sponsor Sen. Will Brownsberger (D-Bel-

mont). “No police necessity can explain their excessive use of force, which has shocked and disgusted fair-minded people across the political spectrum. In the absence of a federal administration willing to hold its agents accountable when they depart from civil norms, states need to impose liability and make court-ordered relief available.”

“I co-sponsored this legislation because no one, regardless of their position or badge, should be above the Constitution,” said Sen. Pavel

Payano (D-Lawrence). “When someone’s rights are violated, they deserve a clear and accessible path to accountability and justice. This bill ensures that Massachusetts residents have that protection, even when the harm comes from federal actors operating in our communities.”

“Our commonwealth has long been a place where civil rights are respected and protected,” said co-sponsor Sen. Cindy Creem (D-Newton). “At a time when abuses by federal agents have caused

fear and uncertainty among immigrant communities and protesters, this legislation makes clear that no one is above the law. By creating a pathway to hold federal agents accountable for civil rights violations, we are reinforcing our commitment to fairness, due process and the protection of our immigrant neighbors.”

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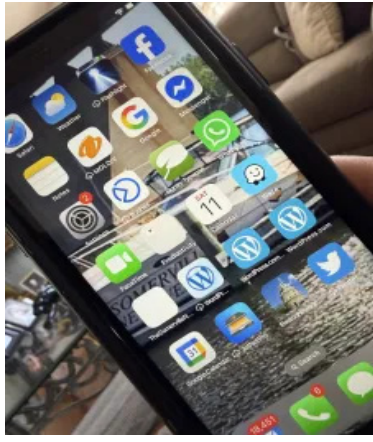
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KIDS AND SOCIAL MEDIA AND CELL PHONES (H 5349)



By Bob Katzen

House 129-25, approved a bill that would prohibit the use of cell phones by students from the time they arrive in school until dismissal. School districts would be required to notify parents of this policy and ensure that parents still have the ability to contact their children during the school day and vice versa.

Other provisions require the secure storage of personal electronic devices; allow the use of technology that renders personal electronic devices inoperable; require school districts to make accommodations and exceptions as necessary for documented medical needs, language access and translation needs for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or disabilities that require the use of personal

electronic devices; and in cases of an emergency.

The bill also restricts the use of social media by children. Provisions include requiring social media companies to implement an age verification system based on the best technology available in order to reasonably and accurately identify a current or prospective user's age; banning minors under the age of 14 from social media platforms, by requiring platforms to terminate users under that age and delete associated personal information effective October 1, 2026; requiring social media platforms to acquire verifiable parental consent for 14- and 15-year-old users of their platforms; prohibiting social media platforms from sharing information about a minor's LGBTQ+ status or other characteristics protected under state law; and fining platforms which violate any of these provisions.

The Senate has already approved a different version of the cell phone ban without the social media restrictions. A House-Senate conference committee will hammer out a compromise version.

"A bell-to-bell prohibition on cell phones and similar devices has long been a priority of mine," said Rep. Alice Peisch (D-Wellesley). "I believe this measure, combined with age restrictions on social media, will support learning, personal growth and meaningful human connection. A social

media ban for children under 14 is not extreme, it is responsible. Technology will continue to play a powerful role in our society, but it must not come at the expense of our children's ability to learn, to connect with others and to develop into healthy adults."

"Social media is robbing our teenagers of their time, their education and most importantly their health," said Rep. Bill MacGregor (D-Boston). "By removing addictive social media feeds for users under 15 years old, we'll be making major strides towards protecting our kids, and helping them build healthy habits online before they're addicted. I supported this amendment to protect all the kids that have been or will be online, and the parents like me that have a hard time saying no to their little ones but worry about an unregulated and safe Internet. With this legislation, we're one step closer to a safer and more healthy world for our kids to grow up in."

"Today the House took an important step in helping protect the children of the commonwealth from predatory social media platforms," said Rep. Aaron Michlewitz (D-Boston), chair of the House Committee on Ways and Means. "The science is clear that exposure to social media at a young age can have a harmful effect on a minor's development. By banning it for those 13 and under and allowing for parental consent for those who are 14 or 15, we will ensure that children are protected

while giving them the ability to express themselves online at a safe and appropriate age."

"A vast majority of superintendents urged us to take the lead in restricting cell phone use from bell-to-bell in our schools," said Rep. Ken Gordon (D-Bedford), House chair of the Committee on Education. "This legislation will help ensure students stay focused in the classroom, are protected from bullying and other forms of distraction, while also encouraging them to engage with one another and be present during non-instructional time. Beyond limiting cell phone use, the bill takes important steps to protect children from the harmful effects of social media on their health and well-being."

"I support getting phones out of the classrooms, but a one size fits all law with no funding to help school districts implement those policies, I am against," said Rep. Kelly Pease (R-Westfield) who voted against the measure. "I think the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education should develop a policy that removes cell phones from classrooms but gives the school district the flexibility on how that is done."

"Although marketed as a child protection law, this social media ban would force all social media users in Massachusetts, including adults, to submit biometric information to tech companies to prove that we are over 16," said Scotia Hille, executive director

of the progressive group Act on Mass. "Allowing parents to request the social media activity of children under 16 puts LGBTQ+ youth and other marginalized teens at risk. At a time of mass surveillance and a crackdown on political speech, the privacy risks of this legislation are staggering."

"While I strongly support the ban on cellphones in schools and the intent and goal of limiting youth access to social media, I voted 'No' on the bill due to concerns with data privacy in the social media sections," said Rep. Mike Connolly (D-Cambridge). "Age verification for minors means age verification for all users, and this raises big questions of data privacy and protection."

"While I support the underlying goals and intentions of both aspects of the bill passed, I have concerns with several aspects including First Amendment rights, personal data collection and storage for minors, and unintended unfunded mandates on our schools," said Rep. Joe McKenna (R-Sutton). "I believe that school districts already have the ability to craft and implement phone-free policies without needing a state law to mandate such."

(A "Yes" vote is for the bill. A "No" vote is against it.)

Rep. Christine Barber Yes Rep. Mike Connolly No Rep. Paul Donato Yes Rep. Erika Uyerhoeven No

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Somerville/Medford News Weekly Speakup Line: Looking for a Porch for Porch Fest!

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"Hello, I'm a homeowner on School St. but School St. is not allowed to

participate in Porch Fest. I am a DJ of 25 years with current residencies internationally. Looking to play fun classics, house, funk and more. I have all gear and live sound. Looking to collaborate, or rent a porch just for fun and good times. Thanks!"



Somerville Celebrating Week of the Young Child with Citywide Events, Family Festival

Enjoy free music, food and family activities at community celebration on Thursday, April 16

SOMERVILLE – Somerville families, educators, and caregivers are invited to take part in the Week of the Young Child, a citywide series of events from April 11 through April 17 celebrating early childhood and the people who support it every day.

"As a dad, I know how much it takes to raise a kid well—and how much it depends on the people around you," said Mayor

Wilson. "This week is about celebrating the families, educators, and neighbors who show up for our kids every day and make Somerville the kind of place they can grow up strong."

Somerville's week of celebrations will include programming and activities across the city, family-friendly specials in local restaurants, and will culminate in a community-wide celebration on Thursday, April 16, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. on the Somerville High School concourse (81 Highland Ave). The event will include family-friendly music, food, and

activities. "Week of the Young Child is a great way to celebrate the long history of Early Childhood work in Somerville," said Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Rubén Carmona. "In Somerville Public Schools, we're committed to making sure our youngest learners have access to high quality learning opportunities and to providing inclusive, multilingual programming and wrap-around services for families, and we are grateful for strong partnerships between the Public Schools, the city, and multiple community partners."

About Week of the Young Child Marking its 55th year, Week of the Young Child was designated by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NaEYC) to focus public attention on the needs of young children, their families, and the communities that help them thrive.

City of Somerville Youth and Family Supports The One Somerville, Every Child umbrella tagline reflects Somerville's commitment to equity and its collective approach to supporting all children and youth in our city.

The City's newest addition to support this goal is the Child Care Career Advancement Initiative, which focuses on supporting licensed family child-care providers, as well as residents interested in entering the field of early childhood education. This work is funded by the city's Jobs Creation and Retention Trust and managed by the SomerPromise Department.

For more information regarding Somerville child and youth programs or initiatives, please visit somervillehub.org.

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Somerville's Porchfest Returns Saturday, May 9: Applications Now Open



Volunteers Invited to be Porchfest Ambassadors

SOMERVILLE — PorchFest returns to Somerville on Saturday, May 9, and applications are now open for participants. The annual event organized by the City's Somerville Arts Council features mini concerts hosted by residents on their porches, yards — and even on stoops — across the city. All musical genres are welcome from alt rock to zither quartets, and hosts are invited to apply by the April 21 deadline to participate. Volunteers are also invited to apply to be Porchfest ambassadors to assist visitors.

"PorchFest is one of Somerville's most awaited events for good reason. Not only is it a sign that spring is truly here but there's nothing quite like seeing porches transform into stages and hosting a citywide jam fest," said Mayor Jake Wilson. "To keep this tradition strong, our Arts Council and public safety teams are working closely together to make sure this year's event is welcoming for everyone, and I can't wait to see it come to life."

In addition to hosting or performing, community members can get involved by volunteering to be a Porchfest Ambassador. Volunteers will orient visitors, answer questions, monitor safety, and serve as points of contact. It's a great way to help make the event a success, and ambassadors get a cool, limited edition Porchfest T-shirt.

Key Updates & Changes for 2026: Porchfest has become popular, so the City needs all hosts and participants to help keep the event organized and safe. Please review and follow the information and guidance below as you plan to host, perform, volunteer, or attend:

Locations & Timing
To bring music to a range of neighborhoods

— and to keep the noise impacts in any one area to just two hours — Porchfest is held in 2-hour blocks in three City zones.

This year, Porchfest will move across Somerville in these three timed zones:
West Zone (West of Willow Avenue): 12–2 p.m.
Central Zone (between Willow and Central Streets): 2–4 p.m.
East Zone (East of Central Street): 4–6 p.m.
To ease congestion on streets and sidewalks, attendees are encouraged to use Somerville's Community Path to travel between zones. If nature calls, there will be additional porta-a-johns available to help keep Somerville clean and safe for everyone. Please use them!

Street Limitations for Safety:
To ensure firetrucks and ambulances are not impeded, and to keep pedestrians safe, the Somerville Fire and Engineering Departments identify key safety routes for us, and performances are not allowed on those streets.

In some cases, we also need to restrict areas at the ends of the side streets that form intersections with safety routes. But you still have options even if you are on a restricted street or corner. Residents on ineligible streets or corners are

encouraged to partner with a neighbor on a nearby designated street. This is a great way to get to know your neighbors while helping keep Porchfest safe.

Spacing Between Performances:
Imagine if you could hear, say, eight concerts at once. That's not a great way to enjoy music, so performances have to be spread out. Participating performance locations need to be at least 8 houses apart from another approved PorchFest performance location. Participants are responsible for managing their volume so each show nearby can be heard. Use the map to see where performances have already been approved to know if where bands are already playing.

Apply to Host a Porch Concert:
Applications are due April 21 at 11:59 p.m. Applying does not guarantee participation. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis by Public Safety officials and the Arts Council. A map of approved locations will be published online as applications are approved. Apply at somerilleartscouncil.org/porchfest.

Apply to Host a Block Party:
Block parties must apply separately through Citizen Serve (somerillema.gov/citizen-serve) to request a block party permit. Applications are open March 17 – April 20 and will be reviewed based on the same street safety restrictions above.

Apply to be an Ambassador Volunteer:
This is an excellent opportunity for community members who love PorchFest, have seen this event grow, and are interested in keeping it safe, accessible, organized, and neighborly. Apply to be an ambassador at somerilleartscouncil.org/porchfest/porchfest-ambassador.

Be sure to note the deadlines! To ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for everyone, we can't make any exceptions to the deadlines. All information and the application link are available at somerilleartscouncil.org/porchfest.

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Applications Now Open for Mayor's Summer Jobs Program



From running rec games to assisting with community outreach, teens can earn \$18.85/hour; Apply by April 30

SOMERVILLE – Somerville

teens (ages 14+) can now apply for the 2026 Mayor's Summer Jobs Program, a six-week paid opportunity to earn money, build skills, and get a behind-the-scenes look at how the City runs.

Each summer, local teens take on roles across more than 20 City departments — everything from helping with Parks and Recreation programs and supporting library events, to assisting with community outreach, and organizing city data.

The program is open to Somerville teens ages 14 through the summer of high school graduation. Opportunities are designed to give teens early work experience while staying connected to their community.

Program Details
 Compensation: \$18.85/hour for all positions
 Time Commitment: Most positions are 20 hours per week and run July 6 through August 14
 Eligibility:
 o Applicants must be 14

years old by May 4, 2026
 o Must be a Somerville resident or enrolled in a Somerville school
 Deadline to Apply: Interested youth can apply now through Thursday, April 30, by completing the online application at somervillema.gov/summerjobs. All applicants will be interviewed in early May.

Participants are placed across a wide variety of City departments including Parks and Recreation, Public Works, Police and

Fire, Libraries, and more. Limited positions will also be available in non-municipal, private businesses and non-profits around Somerville. Schedules will vary by jobsite and placement. All positions require onboarding and orientation.

For any questions, please email summerjobs@somervillema.gov or call 311 (617-666-3311).

\$1.57 BILLION FISCAL 2026 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET (S 3041)



By zBob Katzen

Senate 35-4, approved a \$1.57 billion fiscal 2026 budget. Some of the funding will come from the \$1.3 billion generated by the 2022 voter-approved constitutional amendment, known by supporters as the Millionaire's Tax and the Fair Share Amendment, which imposes a surtax of an additional 4 percent income tax, in addition to the current 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."

Provisions include \$1 million in legal defense services for immigrants; \$10 million for full-tuition scholarships for UMass Chan Medical School students pursuing family medicine if they commit to remaining in Massachusetts and serving populations in need for five years after graduation; \$100 million to ensure that Massachusetts' public universities are able to withstand reductions in federal research funding; a new \$32 million in-

vestment to provide immediate relief for strained municipal budgets by increasing special education reimbursement rates; \$150 million for high-quality and accessible early education and care; \$40 million for early literacy initiatives; \$18.3 million to expand financial assistance offered to Massachusetts students enrolled at state universities and UMass campuses; \$2.5 million to boost school-based mental health support; and \$1 million to help public schools pay for costs incurred to implement the ban on cell phones use by students during school hours.

Other provisions include a new targeted sales tax exemption for building materials to incentivize the construction of new affordable, moderate-income and middle-income housing units for certain housing projects; \$535 million in direct support for the MBTA for operational funding, commuter rail support and the low-income fare relief program; and \$535 million for the MBTA for operational funding, commuter rail support and the low-income fare relief program; \$20 million for the Home Energy Assistance Program to assist eligible low-income elders, working families and other households with assistance paying a portion of winter heating bills; and \$1 million to help public schools pay for costs incurred by cities and towns to implement the ban on cell phones use by students during

school hours.

"By including innovative policy solutions with strong investments, we are going beyond just allocating funding in this budget," said Senate President Karen Spilka (D-Ashland). "We are lowering taxes to spur housing, building our health care workforce and protecting our immigrant neighbors, on top of making generational investments in statewide transit and education."

"Today, the Senate passed a consolidated Fair Share supplemental budget that makes significant strides in educational initiatives and transportation infrastructure, while maintaining our focus on municipal relief and regional equity," said Sen. Mike Rodrigues (D-Westport), Chair of the Senate Committee on Ways and Means. "The Senate continues to support special education, literacy growth and also establishes a primary care higher education scholarship pilot program at UMass Medical that will help fill the shortage of primary care physicians in the commonwealth. We also go big on transportation, investing Fair Share dollars to support the ongoing renovation and infrastructure improvements at the MBTA. This spending plan also addresses the harsh winter and historic blizzard of 2026, dedicating \$100 million for municipal relief to beleaguered municipalities all

across Massachusetts."

"The Senate found time to pass yet another massive supplemental budget that did not include any reforms to our broken welfare system, any tax relief for our small businesses and taxpayers and no relief for ratepayers," said Paul Craney, executive director of the Mass Fiscal Alliance. "The Massachusetts Legislature thinks it's their job to spend every penny they can extract from the taxpayers for their pet projects."

None of the four Republican senators who voted against the budget responded to repeated attempts by Beacon Hill Roll Call asking them to comment on the bill's passage and to explain why they voted against it. Those four senators are Sens. Kelly Dooner (R-Taunton), Peter Durant (R-Spencer), Ryan Fattman (R-Sutton) and Bruce Tarr (R-Gloucester).

(A "Yes" vote is for the budget. A "No" vote is against it.)

Sen. Patricia Jehlen Yes

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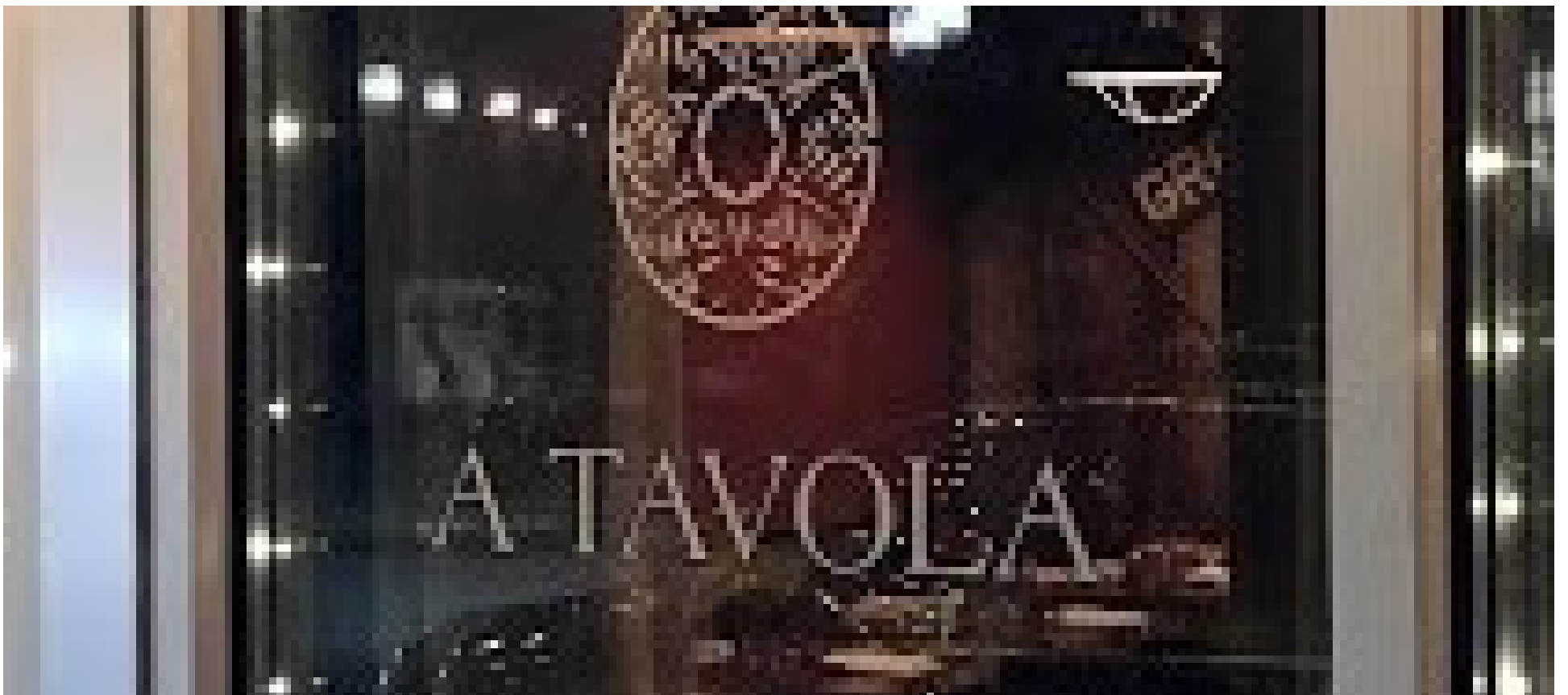
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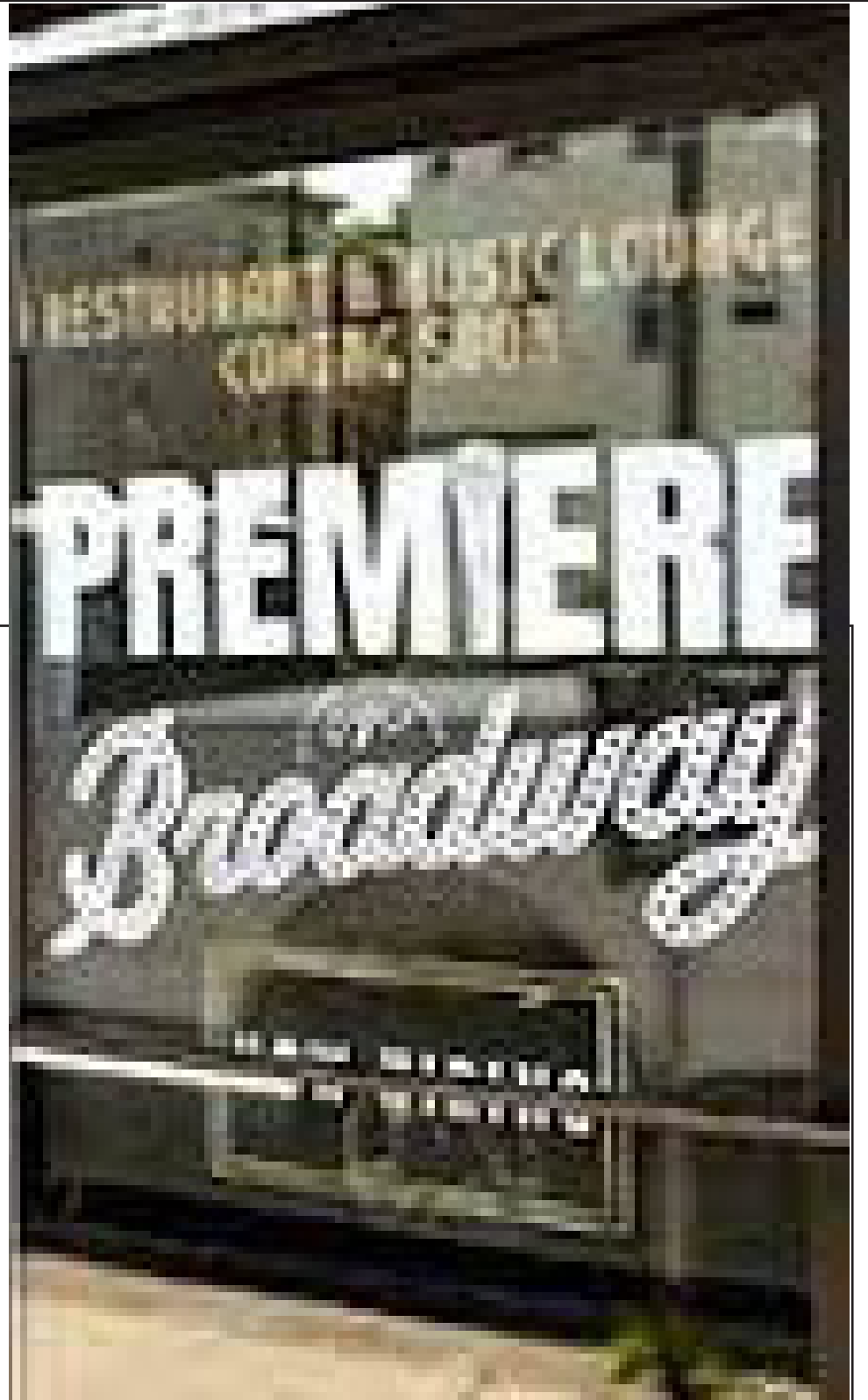
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