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Councilors:

I respectfully submit a docket item to your Honorable Council requesting to seek Home Rule legislation allowing the City to increase the maximum real property tax exemptions and reductions for certain programs authorized under M.G.L. c. 59 beyond that amount currently allowed by the state. Given the high cost of living in the metro Boston area, and specifically the City of Newton, I am requesting the enhancements for the following tax assistance programs:

VETERAN – EXEMPTION - G.L. c. 59, sec. 5, cl. 22

Clause 22 authorizes an exemption for the real property taxes of qualifying veterans or spouses of veterans in the maximum amount of \$400. I am requesting that the maximum allowable exemption be increased to \$800.

VETERAN – EXEMPTION - G.L. c. 59, sec. 5, cl. 22

Clause 22 authorizes an exemption for the real property taxes of qualifying veterans or spouses of veterans in the maximum amount of \$500. I am requesting that the maximum allowable exemption be increased to \$1,000.

DISABLED VETERAN – EXEMPTION - G.L. c. 59, sec. 5, cl. 22E

Clause 22E authorizes an exemption for the real property taxes of qualifying veterans determined to have suffered total disability in the line of duty in the maximum amount of \$1,000. I am requesting that the maximum allowable exemption be increased to \$2,000.

BLIND PERSON – EXEMPTION - G.L. c. 59, sec. 5, cl. 37A

Clause 37A authorizes an exemption for the real property taxes of a blind person in the maximum amount of \$500. I am requesting that the maximum allowable exemption be increased to \$1,000.

SENIOR CITIZENS – EXEMPTION - G.L. c. 59, sec. 5, cl. 41C

Clause 41C authorizes an exemption for the real property taxes of seniors over the age of 65 in the maximum amount of \$1,000. I am requesting that the maximum allowable exemption be increased to \$2,000.

SENIOR CITIZENS – REDUCTION - G.L. c. 59, sec. 5K and VETERANS -REDUCTION – G.L. c. 59, sec. 5N

Section 5K and 5N, respectively, authorize a reduction for the real property taxes of seniors over the age of 60 or veterans in exchange for volunteer services to the city. The statute permits a maximum reduction based on either 125 volunteer service hours or \$1,500. The City currently allows a reduction based on the maximum 125 volunteer service hours. I am requesting that the maximum reduction in exchange for volunteer services be increased to 200 volunteer services hours or \$3,000.

ELDERLY SURVIVING SPOUSE, MINOR CHILD -EXEMPTION - G.L. c. 59, sec. 5, cl. 17D

Clause 17D authorizes an exemption for the real property taxes of a surviving spouse, a minor child whose parent is deceased, or seniors over the age of 70, in the maximum amount of \$219. I am requesting that the maximum be doubled, increasing the exemption amount to \$438.

I have attached for your consideration a draft of the proposed special legislation.

In view of the fact that the General Court has concluded its business for the current year, the Home Rule Legislation should be filed at the opening of the new term. Following passage of the Home Rule Legislation, Chapter 27 Taxation of the City's Ordinances will need to be amended to include the increased exemption amounts and changes to the maximum allowable reduction under the volunteer services programs.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Ruthanne Fuller
Mayor

AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE CITY OF NEWTON TO AMEND THE MAXIMUM AMOUNT FOR
CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS AND REAL PROPERTY TAX REDUCTION
PROGRAMS

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SECTION 1. (a) Notwithstanding clause Seventeenth D of section 5 of chapter 59 of the General laws, the city of Newton may, by ordinance, provide a real property tax exemption of up to a sum of four hundred and thirty-eight dollars.

(b) For the purposes of clause Seventeenth D of Section 5 of chapter 59 of the General laws, up to the sum of two hundred and nineteen dollars shall be borne by the commonwealth; the balance, up to the sum of two hundred and nineteen dollars, shall be borne by the city of Newton.

SECTION 2. (a) Notwithstanding clause Twenty-second of section 5 of chapter 59 of the General laws, the city of Newton may, by ordinance, provide a real property tax exemption of up to a sum of eight hundred dollars.

(b) For the purposes of clause Twenty-second of section 5 of chapter 59 of the General laws, up to the sum of five hundred and seventy-five dollars of the exemption shall be borne by the city of Newton; the balance, up to the sum of two hundred and twenty-five dollars shall be borne by the commonwealth.

SECTION 3. (a) Notwithstanding clause Twenty-second E of section 5 of chapter 59 of the General laws, the city of Newton may, by ordinance, provide a real property tax exemption of up to a sum of two thousand dollars.

(b) For the purposes of clause Twenty-second E of section 5 of Chapter 59 of the General laws, up to the sum of one thousand one hundred and seventy-five dollars of the exemption shall be borne by the city of Newton; the balance, up to the sum of eight hundred and twenty-five dollars, shall be borne by the commonwealth.

SECTION 4. Notwithstanding clause Thirty-seventh A of section 5 of chapter 59 of the General laws, the city of Newton may, by ordinance, provide a real property tax exemption of up to a sum of one thousand dollars.

SECTION 5. Notwithstanding clause Forty-first C of section 5 of chapter 59 of the General laws, the city of Newton may, by ordinance, provide a real property tax exemption of up to a sum of two thousand dollars.

SECTION 6. Notwithstanding section 5K of chapter 59 of the General laws, the city of Newton may, by ordinance, provide a real property tax reduction up to an amount of \$3,000 or an amount based on 200 volunteer service hours.

SECTION 7. Notwithstanding section 5N of chapter 59 of the General laws, the city of Newton may, by ordinance, provide a real property tax reduction up to an amount of \$3,000 or an amount based on 200 volunteer service hours.

SECTION 8. This act shall take effect upon its passage.