

# **New Bedford City Councilor Oliver opposes Healey's tax hike in her Municipal "Empowerment" Act**

"On Friday, January 19, 2024, Governor Maura Healey first unveiled the Municipal Empowerment Act. A Bill which will fall on your desk in the coming days if not already.

As a member of our state delegation, you'll then begin the crucial task of dissecting this bill and discussing the impact to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, to the municipalities within, our residents and businesses. I'm writing this letter to express my opposition to the reform which allows increases to the Vehicle Excise Tax, Hotel/Lodging Tax as well as the Prepared Meal Tax at the local level. Although I see this as way to empower it also has the ability to divide amongst our communities and I strongly urge you to suggest or support efforts to strike it entirely.

Although it's imperative for the State Legislature to support cities and towns throughout the commonwealth and present local officials with "new tools" to better serve their communities, we must remain mindful of the major stresses our taxpayers are facing. Residents and businesses throughout the Commonwealth continue to struggle day to day as we're still under the choke hold of inflation, a troubling housing crisis, and an uncertain job market. These factors solidify the argument that this is not the time to increase these already heavy burdens.

Instead, we must continue to look for ways to cut taxes, save money, do more with less throughout all levels of government, and not just continue to come to the taxpayer with our hands out. Although locally it's been said that there are "No Plans"

to use these new proposed tools our taxpayers just can't take that chance. As Elected Officials it is our job to make life easier, not harder. I hope you'll strongly consider opposing these measures which will have an adverse effect and instead empower our residential and commercial taxpayers, our tourists, and our restaurant goers to just go elsewhere.

In closing, I compel you to sit down, take a deep breath, look in the mirror and see your constituency in the reflection, then ask whether this bill fully supports vibrant communities where people will want to live, work, play and stay."-New Bedford City Councilor Shawn Oliver.