

Abington Taxpayers' Protection Group

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For Immediate Release

The Abington Taxpayers Protection Group is a committee of concerned Abington taxpayers organized to oppose the approval of a \$1.7 million Proposition 2 ½ Override. Mary Jo Franey is the Chairman of the committee. The election to determine the override is being held on Saturday, July 25th at the Abington High School. The polls will be open from 8:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m. Voters wishing to vote by absentee ballot must do so by 12:00 Noon on Friday, July 24th.

On Monday, July 13th, the Abington Board of Selectmen took strong action concerning the upcoming override election, and voted unanimously to not endorse the override. "Our group is extremely thankful to the Board of Selectmen for coming out so strongly in opposition to the override. We believe that the Selectmen acted in the best interests of the town in helping to draft a balanced budget and we believe they are acting in the best interests of the town in not supporting the override."

Some of the reasons given by the Selectmen in opposing the override included the cost to the individual property taxpayer, the fact that this is the second override in two years being sought to balance the budget, and the fact that school teachers are getting a 3% pay raise this year, and for the two years following this year.

"Our group is not against education or the school teachers. We have a good number of parents with children in schools on our committee. For those of us who don't have children in the schools, most of us did so at one point. We understand that the teachers negotiated a contract with the School Committee, and we understand that the School Committee agreed to the 3-year contract with 3% pay raises in each of those years. What we were hoping, and still hope, is that the teachers and the School Committee can reach an agreement to reopen the contract and reduce its cost to save jobs, and to send a message that we are in fact all looking out for our town's best interests" said Mrs. Franey.

Mrs. Franey also addressed the potential closing of North School by the School Committee in the event that the override fails. "My children went to North School and I was a teacher's aide there for a number of years. I am a big believer in keeping neighborhood schools open. In 2004, the Abington schools were faced with a tougher budget year than this year. In 2004, the schools had to absorb a 12.5% level service budget cut. This year the cut would be 8.7% if the override is not successful. In 2004, the School Committee had slated North School to close if the override failed. The override did fail, and thank goodness North School remained open. I would hope that the School Committee could find other alternatives if the override doesn't pass to keep North School open."