

Abington Taxpayers' Protection Group

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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 override election will be held on Saturday, July 25 at the Abington High School. The polls will be open from 8:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m.

Recently, a committee organized in favor of passing the override, 'Come Together for Abington', issued a publication stating that certain "consequences" will occur if the override does not pass. "Of course, we all respect the right of individuals to state their opinions, but when opinions are stated as fact in order to influence people's votes, I think it is important to point that out" said Mrs. Franey in response to the publication.

Specifically, in Come Together for Abington's mailing piece it states that if the override is defeated, Abington will have "LOWER PROPERTY VALUES". That is just not factual. In 2003, the voters of Abington overwhelmingly rejected a Proposition 2 ½ override. According to figures from the Division of Local Services at the Massachusetts Department of Revenue, the average assessed value of a home in Abington was \$195,541 the year the override was defeated. The following year the average assessed value of a home in Abington was \$297,469. Values actually increased dramatically after the defeat of the override and continued to rise for four more years.

Last year, Abington passed a \$650,000 override by a very slim margin. The average assessed value for a home last year was \$347,780. This year the average assessment was \$337,804. Property values actually decreased after the override passed.

"As you can see, no-one can accurately predict what property values are going to do, especially in this economy. I could just as well say that if the override passes, based on recent history, property values will fall. The point is that you shouldn't mislead people by stating opinions as facts, which is what is done in the Come Together piece", said Mrs. Franey.

Additionally, Come Together for Abington's piece states that if the override doesn't pass, the Police Department's Detective Division will dramatically reduce shift coverage and become less proactive. What they fail to tell the voters is there will still be two full-time detectives serving the town, and that the elimination of the detective's position is as the result of a retirement and not a layoff. The piece also states that there will be a loss of 2 to 3 ambulance shifts per week and that there will not be ambulance service available for all seven days of the week. Again, this is not true. According to the Town Manager's office, there will be no loss of ambulance shifts if the override fails.

"I understand that emotion enters into any campaign, and that people working on campaigns sometimes get caught up in that emotion, but we should all make sure we are presenting accurate facts when we are trying to influence voters. The voters deserve that" said Mrs. Franey.