



Testimony
Tax Classification Hearing – Town of Clinton
Wednesday, November 30, 2022

Roy Nascimento

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Board, and Town officials - For the record, my name is Roy Nascimento and I serve as president and CEO of the North Central Massachusetts Chamber of Commerce. I am joined today by Travis Condon, our Public Affairs Manager. The Chamber is a membership-based, volunteer-led organization focused on advancing the communities of North Central Massachusetts. We have a dynamic program of work and an impressive record of accomplishment supporting local businesses and growing the economy. We see ourselves as a partner to the Town of Clinton and the other 26 communities within North Central Massachusetts, working collectively towards the common goals of prosperity and a thriving community.

We appreciate the opportunity to speak this evening on an important issue which impacts economic development and the future of this community. I would like to start by thanking this Board for its work in recent years to improve the Town's business climate, both for its existing businesses and for those who consider locating here. We would also like to thank Town Administrator Michael Ward, Phil Duffy, Director of the Office of Community and Economic Development and other town officials, who have made economic development a priority.

We know that you have a difficult decision to make tonight as you set the tax rates for FY2023 and we are here today to encourage you to continue narrowing the gap

between commercial/industrial and residential, with the ultimate goal of working towards a single tax rate. We believe that moving to a single tax rate is the right decision long term for the Town of Clinton. As you know, Clinton is one of the few communities remaining in Worcester County that still has a split tax rate. Other communities have recognized that the split tax system is poor public policy and negatively impacts the community. While initially implemented in the 1980s to help residential taxpayers, it has had the opposite effect and actually hurts residents by driving out commercial and industrial taxpayers and discouraging investment in the community.

We recognize that tax rates are only one factor in an economy –inflation, energy costs, workforce, health care costs and many other things also play a role. But tax rates are a powerful one and one of the few things that is within the power of the Select Board to impact. There is nothing you can do about health care costs, energy costs and so on. But adopting a more competitive tax rate and working towards a single rate is something that you can do something about tonight. It would send a positive message to local businesses and undo a serious mistake made many years ago that has left the Town of Clinton at a disadvantage.

Making the commercial tax burden more competitive will better position Clinton to attract new business investment, retain existing businesses, increase tax revenues and will send a powerful message that the town is business friendly. Communities thrive with a solid base of businesses, jobs, resources and tax revenues, and these are the result of business friendly policies and tax rates.

Thank you again, for your time this evening on this important economic development matter. We look forward to continuing to work with the town to help advance the local and regional economy.