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Protect Our Communities: Vote "No" on Slashing the Sales Tax

They're at it again. Carla Howell & Friends at the Committee for Small Government have qualified another anti-tax question for the November ballot, this one to slash the sales tax to 3 percent. These are the same people who brought us Question 1 in 2008, the initiative – which the voters sensibly defeated – to repeal the state income tax.

The Sales Tax Initiative would slash revenues by \$2.5 billion a year on top of the billions in cuts already made during this recession. How much is \$2.5 billion? It equals one-half of all state spending on our 1,900 public schools. Or, looking at it another way, it is equal to two and a half times as much as the state spends each year on all of our community colleges and state universities.

Here's where some of the pain would be felt.

- **Public Education.** Our public schools and colleges would have to absorb a huge share of the cuts. There would be massive layoffs, bigger class sizes, disruption of programs and a decline in the quality of education in our schools and colleges.
- **Health Care.** More cuts will hurt already struggling community hospitals, school nursing services, public health initiatives and community health centers.
- **Quality of Life.** Local aid to cities and towns would be slashed, affecting public safety, parks and recreation, senior services, libraries, road repair and so much more.
- **Economy.** By causing the sudden layoff of so many teachers, firefighters, police officers, social workers and others while we are still coping with a recession, a cut of this size could halt – or even reverse – the state's economic recovery.
- **Property Taxes.** Cities and towns would be forced to raise property taxes and seek overrides simply to maintain basic services.

A growing number of civic, human services, labor and business organizations oppose slashing the sales tax from 6.25 percent to 3 percent. Voting "yes" might feel good for a day. But losing the revenues would feel terrible for years to come, making tough times even tougher for our families, our communities and our quality of life in Massachusetts.

Vote "NO" on Slashing the Sales Tax on November 2!