

Lea Tran  
WU21

### **Mayor Wu reappears in front of state lawmakers with a revised tax proposal**

BOSTON—Mayor Michelle Wu testified before the Joint Revenue Committee, on Wednesday, about her revised bill to shift the tax levy on commercial properties to protect local communities.

At the Massachusetts Statehouse, Wu, accompanied by state representative Rob Consalvo, the city’s chief financial officer, Ashley Groffenberger, and commissioner, Nick Ariniello, presented Bill 5099, an updated petition of Wu’s original proposal from earlier this year.

“With this temporary legislative authority we would be able to stabilize our property tax system, preserve affordability, and create a smoother, more moderate impact over time ensuring that future bills for all taxpayers, residential and commercial, are as stable as possible compared to recent years,” said Wu.

Bill 5099 is an act relative to property tax classification in the city of Boston. The bill would adjust property tax rates by increasing taxes on commercial properties to protect homeowners.

Wu said residents face a “nearly 30% increase in January bills.” This updated petition could temporarily relieve homeowners from the rising tax rates, said Wu.

The petition established a new three-year timeframe. Section one outlined a maximum tax levy shift of 181.5% onto commercial property owners in 2025, 180% in 2026, and 178% in 2027.

The updated petition also would provide support for small business owners.

Section two would change the personal property tax exemption from a maximum of \$10,000 to \$30,000. Section 3 stated Boston could spend up to \$15 million a year to aid small businesses if commercial property taxes rise too much.

Wu and her committee reminded the council that this bill would seek “to solve an allocation problem, not a revenue problem”, as the council brought up concern of Boston’s post-covid economy.

Members of the community were able to share their thoughts on the proposal.

The Massachusetts Senior Action Council made up more than two-thirds of the audience. Members wore blue sweatshirts and carried the sign “Don't Let Taxes Out of Our Homes. Pass Bill 5099.”

Four members talked about the struggles of living on a fixed income and facing these tax increases.

“When you live on a fixed income, you learn to steal from Peter to pay Paul all the time. At 78, I did not think I would have to live like this and I am living like this,” said Adonica Chaplin, a retired Boston police officer who bought her home in 1976.

However, some community members were skeptical of the petition.

Shlomo Pinkas, a member of Small Property Owner Associations, testified against Bill 5099 saying the bill would start a negative trend in Boston’s distribution of money.

“They will be back in a few years for another one,” said Pinkas, “You’re opening the barn door on that one.”

Lou Murray, former chairperson of Boston Celtic Radio, called the petition a “case of a fairy tale.”

“There is no way that we can tax our way out of the collapse of commercial real estate in the United States,” said Murray.

The hearing started at 11:11 a.m. and concluded at 12:20 p.m.

Wu said the petition was approved by the Boston City Council, earlier in October, with a 12-1 vote. She said the bill needs to be passed in the next two weeks to ensure it can be implemented before tax bills are issued to property owners on January 1st.

“I am fighting the same fight to hold on to what I have,” said Adonica Chaplin.