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CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

APRIL 15, 1983

In view of the Cambridge assessments being delayed again; the hiring of a consultant for at least \$50,000.; the three million extra dollars in the school committee budget for 1983-1984; the possibility of another "override of 2-1/2" election; and the Governor's package plan to make Prop. 2-1-2 work "as was intended!", the enclosed letter which I wrote some time ago seems to be particularly timely.

EVEN MORE FRUSTRATED

Copies to: Cambridge City Council
Cambridge School Committee
Cambridge Chronicle
Cambridge Tab
Boston Globe
Mike Barnicle (Globe Columnist)
Governor Michael Dukakis
and most particularly --
Jerry Williams, Radio WRKO

PLEASE READ

FEBRUARY, 1983

I am a homeowner in Cambridge, struggling to hold on, as I am sure many are. Recently, the local paper had an announcement that the city council had suggested that the school committee members be paid a "part-time" salary of \$10,000. plus medical and dental plans which would be nearer \$12,000. total.

On that same day I received a couple of notices - a 17% increase in natural gas; and a 20% increase in Blue Cross - Blue Shield premiums; which motivated me to protest over something I feel very strongly about; the school committee salaries and medical coverage.

I immediately called the city council and told the assistant (the only person I could reach), I thought this was extremely irresponsible in view of several things --

1. Cambridge residents have been waiting for reassessment figures for almost two years, and are certain they will not mean lower real estate taxes.
2. Cambridge had an expensive special election last Spring to override Proposition 2-1/2 because they could not afford the cuts called for in the bill.
3. Many teachers were laid off because of 2-1/2 (rather than the declining enrollment which is fact.) It happened that many minority staff went, and our myriad school administrators were barely touched.
4. There is high unemployment which council members are supposedly concerned about; but evidently not concerned enough to turn down their own salary increases.
5. Housing and services for the elderly are problems which Harvard and M. I. T. are willing to help us solve. However, the council is too busy feuding with them to have problem-solving sessions; which would certainly help to alleviate the situation.

The council spokesman told me mine was the only call they had received, a fact which surprised and concerned me. Next week, sure enough, the council passed the bonanza, and the Cambridge Chronicle contained only two letters opposing it.

I feel that the Chronicle was shirking its responsibility in not pointing out the aforesaid items editorially, whether or not they agreed with the proposed salaries.

I decided to remain anonymous because it seemed that most people were too intimidated to protest, and perhaps with good reason.

Historically, school committees are made up of unpaid, concerned citizens, who unfortunately are too often politically motivated in this City (to the detriment of education). (I do realize that the way was paved for this action by a bill passed by the Massachusetts Legislature, sponsored by Bachrach and Wolf; a bill, that I feel is unnecessary and cumbersome to the City in the current economic situation.)

Why do the people of this really nice city let it be diminished by its' politicians? Can't something be done? It is a horrible feeling to feel that if you speak out, it can be used against you.

I am hoping that the people who receive this will read it and make some outcry that will be heard. Thank you for your time.

ANONYMOUS AND FRUSTRATED.

US-296
Re: an anonymous communication with regard
to the effects of Proposition 2½.

May 9, 1983

21-17