

We learned in kindergarten that paying your fair share is a basic value. This bill has some flaws but is a recognition of that basic principle.

Pilot was a law that was supposed to ensure that city taxpayers were reimbursed for benefits state law required them to provide for non residents.

As you know, State law limits towns to raising revenue through a property tax. So We cannot tax the 40,000 suburbanites who work in new haven, and we cannot tax commuters or put up tolls. We must focus on taxing property within our boundaries.

And then to really complicate matters state law also prohibits towns from taxing non profit property. And new haven is central headquarters for many of the states colleges, hospitals, and non profits who service most of the regions special needs population.

So in New Haven we are in double bind. Our population is made of many desperately needy people who require many city services, and the only way we can pay for them is to overtax the the 50% of property the state lets us tax.

So new haven is absorbing the regions needy, and then on top of that subsidizing the region in the form of not taxing non profits who mostly benefit the region as well. Imagine the state with no Yale University, no Albertus, no yale new haven hospital, no Smilow, no gateway. The state recognized when it originally passed pilot that 77% of the benefits of city based non profits went to non residents.

At 77 % we pay over 90m in benefits to the suburbs that without full pilot are not reimbursed.

When pilot was fully funded in the 90s and until 2001, new haven became prosperous. It grew because it had the funding to be autonomous, keep taxes reasonable, and predictably budget.

Then the state started to cut pilot. Over time it fell to just 32 cents on the dollar. The result: new haven taxpayers now subsidize the region to the tune of 50m per year. The home values have fallen, the services have decreased, the pension debt has risen and our taxes rise every year. A vicious cycle that slowly kills our best city. And makes city taxpayers the subsidizers of their regional neighbors benefits.

This is classic free riding. The city pays the tab, and everyone else enjoys the ride. The unfairness of this cannot be denied. New haven already deals with a very difficult population of myriad needs. Returning felons, the homeless, the disabled, the generational poor, the special needs children, and so much more. Because new haven absorbs all these folks, other towns have 2-3 acre zoning, homogenous populations, few social issues, lower taxes, rising prop values. The virtuous cycles enjoyed in the suburbs is attributable to and paid for by the vicious cycle experienced in the city

When the state adds to this burden by not paying for pilot, it creates an oppressively unfair environment. New haven is willing to care for this states neediest but it goes to far when it plays

reverse Robin Hood and makes us also pay for its non profit exemption. This is disrespectful and bad for future sustainability

Pay new haven it's full pilot and we will continue to do the heavy lifting of caring for this states neediest. But make us subsidize the region on top of this work and you have all gone too far. The state owes us 400m in unsatisfied pilot over past 10 years. We will even forgive this if we pass a law that guarantees full pilot.

The bill before you is a decent start but as drafted it leaves new haven taxpayers still paying for non resident benefits. The top tier should be at least 70%. If you amended the bill to allow for a top tier of towns who have more than 100,000 people and who have less than 60% taxable property, there would be 3-4 cities that would qualify for 70% pilot reimbursement.

The benefit to the state is that you have now taken care if the imbalance. The city needs no more. No special programs. No handouts. The welfare is over. You gave given us our freedom back. That's all we need. Respect. Autonomy. Dignity. Full pilot.

We think everyone should be able to choose where they wish to live. We ask only that a choice to live outside New haven is not subsidized by those who choose to live in new haven.

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