

From: Franklin Town Council

Franklin, Massachusetts

To: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
(DESE) Department of Revenue, Division of Local Services (DLS)

Date: December 17, 2025

To the Members of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the Division of Local Services:

Thank you for continuing to engage with stakeholders during this important process. The Franklin Town Council deeply appreciates the opportunity to share our perspective on Chapter 70 reform. We welcome the chance to contribute constructively, as Franklin has long been committed to advancing educational equity across Massachusetts.

Franklin is the second-largest Hold Harmless community in the Commonwealth, after Boston. We serve nearly 4,500 students across seven schools, supported by a town that has consistently prioritized education despite significant fiscal constraints. Even after two failed Proposition 2½ overrides, Franklin has exceeded its required local contribution every year for more than a decade, investing responsibly in our schools and students. Yet, structural limitations created by Proposition 2½ and stagnant state aid have placed our community in a difficult cycle.

The Hold Harmless provision was established to ensure that districts are not penalized by shifts in the funding formula that fail to reflect real local capacity or costs. For Franklin, this funding is not a bonus — it is essential. Without it, the town would face devastating cuts to teachers, programs, and student services, undoing decades of progress and undermining the stability of our municipal budget.

Eliminating Hold Harmless abruptly would create a massive shortfall, forcing layoffs, larger class sizes, and reductions to arts, athletics, and advanced course offerings. It would erode educational equity — the very principle Chapter 70 is meant to protect — while destabilizing Franklin's broader fiscal health.

Franklin supports reform; however, it must be balanced. We urge DESE and DLS to:

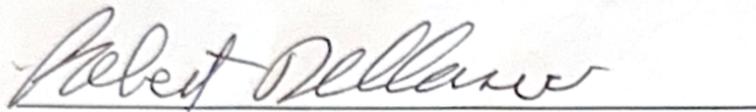
- Maintain Hold Harmless until a sustainable transition is developed, and
- Phase in any formula changes gradually.

Franklin's Broader Fiscal Commitment

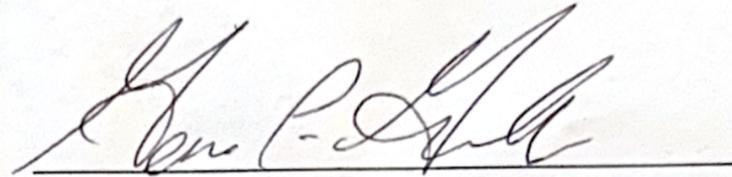
Franklin has managed its expenses responsibly while maintaining a high-quality education system and strong municipal services. We respectfully ask that you preserve the Hold Harmless provision or design a fair transition model that safeguards stability for both our schools and our town.

We stand ready to collaborate with DESE and DLS to ensure that reform strengthens — not weakens — the equitable foundation of public education and municipal governance in Massachusetts.

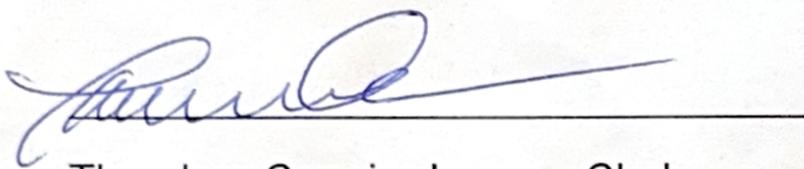
Respectfully,
Franklin Town Council



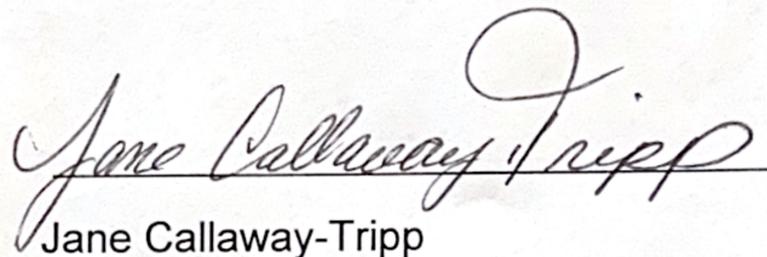
Robert Dellorco - Chair



Gene Grella – Vice Chair



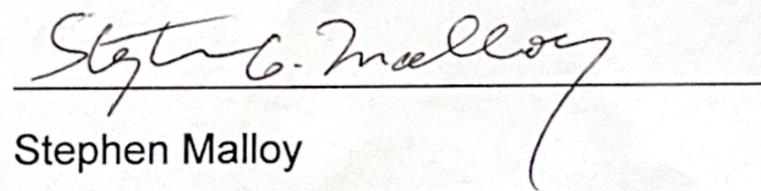
Theodore Cormier-Leger – Clerk



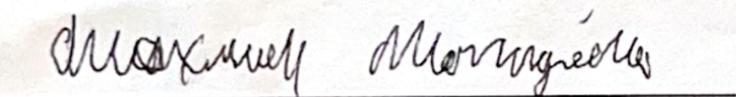
Jane Callaway-Tripp



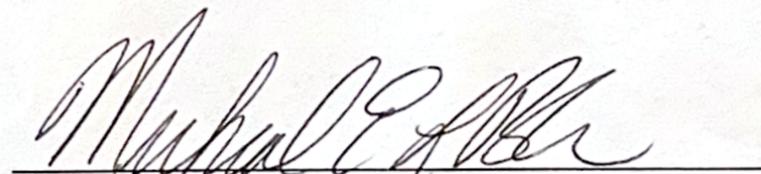
Kenneth Ojukwu



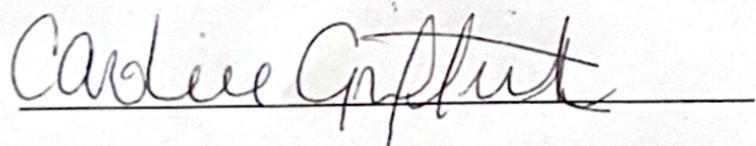
Stephen Malloy



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Michael Leblanc



Caroline Griffith