

# Was it a promise or wasn't it? You decide.

**D**uring the Massachusetts fiscal crisis in 1989, the state's personal income tax rate was raised from 5 percent to 5.75, partly to pay overdue Medicaid bills. The next year the rate was again increased, and presently is 5.95 percent. The bills and the emergency bonds have been paid off. The Commonwealth has a giant

surplus and is also getting a huge tobacco settlement as reimbursement for past Medicaid costs, yet legislators refuse to roll back the income tax rate to 5 percent. Legislative leaders deny that a promise to restore the 5 percent rate was ever made. Read the news clips below their statements, and decide for yourself.

**House Speaker Thomas Finneran disputes (Barbara) Anderson's contention that Beacon Hill promised to roll back the 1989 tax increase once the debt was paid. "Maybe somebody at the time said 'well, gee, maybe**

**we should or maybe we could consider rolling it back..."** *Beacon Hill News - June 23, 1997.*  
**"No such promise was made..."** (Senate President Thomas) Birmingham said. *AP - Jan.27, 1999.*

The Boston Herald • Tuesday, July 4, 1989

## Dems eyeing temporary state income tax hike

By JONATHAN WELLS

THE DEMOCRATIC House leadership yesterday agreed to plug last year's budget deficit with a temporary, 18-month hike in the state's income tax, sources told the Herald.

The precise outline of the tax package was not decided yesterday, but sources said a proposal to fund loans slated to cover a \$619 million deficit will include temporarily increasing the income tax from 5 percent to 5.75 percent

House Speaker George Keverian (D-Everett) emerged from a three-hour leadership meeting yesterday and refused to

describe or discuss the tax plan, but said an agreement had been reached.

Before entering the meeting, the speaker said he is "more in favor" of an 18-month income tax hike than he had been previously, because it would erase the deficit faster and save the state money on debt service.

"It is going to be difficult to sell anything to the members," Keverian said, but he indicated passage would be easier with a temporary tax and short-term bond package.

The Boston Globe • July 4, 1989

By Bruce Mohl

House leaders plan to push for the state to deal with the fiscal 1989 deficit and pay old Medicaid debts by temporarily increasing the state income tax from 5 percent to 5.75 percent, sources said yesterday.

House Speaker George Keverian met with other members of his leadership team yesterday to talk taxes, but he declined to discuss his plans with reporters

until after a meeting with other House members tomorrow.

Sources said Keverian plans to push for an increase in the tax on earned income for an 18-month period, raising between \$680 million and \$800 million. The sources said some bugs remain to be worked out with the proposal, including the implementation of the tax for part of a year.

THE MIDDLESEX NEWS

July 4, 1989

Barbara Anderson of Citizens for Limited Taxation said she doubted that any tax passed by the Legislature would be temporary.

The Boston Globe • July 7, 1989

By Bruce Mohl

The Massachusetts House swallowed the T word last night, voting 82-74 to give initial approval to a temporary 15 percent increase in the state income tax to deal with the fiscal 1989 deficit.

THE MIDDLESEX NEWS

July 7, 1989

The plan, which is being described as temporary, would increase tax rates on earned income from 5 percent to 5.375 percent for 1989 and then up to 5.75 percent for 1990.

The Boston Herald

July 7, 1989

The coalition, a 40-member organization representing 45,000 businesses, also opposed the temporary tax package, saying there is currently no guarantee it would remain in place for just 18 months.

THE MIDDLESEX NEWS

July 9, 1989

In defending his vote, Rep. David P. Magnani yesterday emphasized that the hikes would only be in place for 18 months and that revenue generated would only go towards past bills.

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

July 10, 1989

Massachusetts residents are expected to be hit with a \$793 million tax increase this week as their state struggles to pay off old debts and a budget deficit.

The temporary 15 percent increase in the state income tax, which will last 18 months, was approved Friday by the Massachusetts House. It is expected to win approval this week from the Senate and then go to Gov. Michael Dukakis.

The Boston Herald

July 14, 1989

By JONATHAN WELLS

THE MASSACHUSETTS Legislature gave its approval last night to a temporary, 15 percent hike in the state income tax to cover the state's debts following a blistering, partisan debate.

The House Democratic leadership made its fragile, four-vote advantage stick on an 82-78 vote in favor of the tax bill and the Senate swept the 18-month increase through on a 23-15 vote.

The Swampscott Reporter

July 13, 1989

For his part, state Senator Walter J. Boverini (D-Lynn) was also prepared to support the temporary tax increase. ...

"Everyone likes to blame Michael Dukakis for this. We all have to share the blame and vote in some temporary taxes. But we have to make sure it is temporary."

The Boston Herald

July 27, 1989

## Duke

By Jonathan Wells

IN THE privacy of his State House office, Gov. Michael Dukakis last night signed into law a temporary 15 percent hike in the state income tax designed to sop up the red ink in last year's budget.

Dukakis put his signature on the controversial 18-month tax hike, vetoed \$53.6 million from a final spending bill for the prior fiscal year and quickly departed, offering no public comment on his actions.

July 27, 1989

Associated Press

Boston -- Massachusetts residents are getting their largest income tax increase in a decade under a \$740 million temporary increase signed into law by Governor Michael S. Dukakis.

How many times does  
 "temporary" and "temporarily" appear?

Count up the number and send your answer to:

Citizens for Limited Taxation

PO Box 408

Peabody, MA 01960

for a free information package

Or call: (508) 384-0100

See our website at: <http://cltg.org>