

HOUSE No.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts



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GOVERNOR

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KARYN POLITO
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

January 27, 2017

To the Honorable House of Representatives,

While I value and respect the role and work of the Legislature, and particularly appreciate your willingness to collaborate on so many critical initiatives, I am returning to you unsigned H. 58, “An Act Further Regulating the Compensation of Public Officials,” because it is fiscally irresponsible, would eliminate voter-approved term limits for constitutional officers, and was enacted after limited debate and without a reasonable opportunity for public comment.

This legislation will increase the salaries of public officials across the board, not only by setting a higher salary for legislators, constitutional officers, and the judiciary, but by implementing an index mechanism that ensures that salaries for legislators and constitutional officers will only increase over time and do so at a rate that exceeds any reasonable expectations for revenue growth. Indeed, had this mechanism applied to the salary adjustments made in January 2017, it would have resulted in a two-year increase of 9.47% as compared to the biennial adjustment of 3.96% as recently ascertained under Constitutional Amendment 118.

Moreover, by having these pay raises take effect in January 2017, this bill places an unplanned, additional burden on the financials of the current fiscal year. These raises will also significantly increase the Commonwealth’s pension liability, thus compounding the adverse fiscal effects over time.

Finally, this bill is the result of a hasty process that included little substantive debate or time for public comment. Perhaps as a consequence of this rushed process, there has been little or no debate or public comment on the fact that this bill repeals the term limits for constitutional office holders that the voters approved at the statewide election in 1994.

For these reasons, I am returning H.58 to you unsigned.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles D. Baker,
Governor