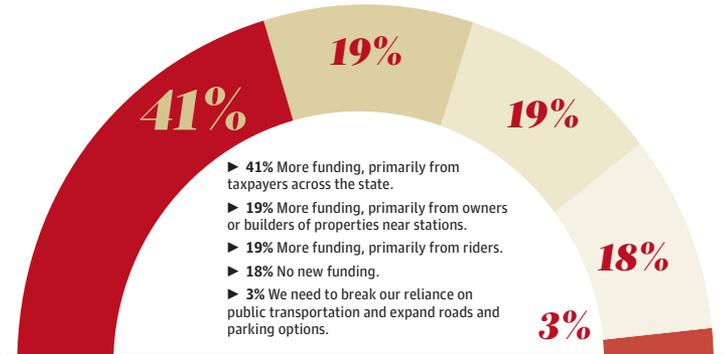


Send letters to the Boston Business Journal
160 Federal St., Boston, MA, 02110-1700
dbanks@bizjournals.com

► BUSINESS PULSE SURVEY

SHOULD THE MBTA GET NEW FUNDING AND IF SO FROM WHERE?

VOTES CAST: 404



Tell us what you think: <http://www.bizjournals.com/boston/pulse>

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LAWSUIT FIGHTS FOR BUSINESS RIGHTS

To the Editor:

Last Tuesday, two Massachusetts companies, with the nationally recognized Goldwater Institute, filed a bold lawsuit seeking to close the “union loophole” in state campaign finance law, (“Conservative group sues to overturn Massachusetts law preventing corporations from making political contributions,” BBJ Feb. 24) and both plaintiffs have connections to the Massachusetts Fiscal Alliance. 1A Auto Inc., a family-owned auto parts retailer in Pepperell, is run by Rick Green, who is also the chairman of Massachusetts Fiscal Alliance’s board. Mike Kane, whose Ashland business, 126 Self Storage Inc., is also part of the suit, serves on the alliance’s board as well.

Massachusetts’ campaign contribution restrictions are tilted heavily in favor of unions and against businesses. Since 1908, businesses have faced a total contribution ban to state candidates. The “union loophole” originated by special rules implemented outside the normal legislative process in 1988. These special rules allow unions to contribute as much as \$15,000 to state candidates, while individuals are permitted to contribute up to \$1,000. After unions have donated \$15,000 to a campaign, their political action committees (PACs) can continue

to contribute up to the ordinary limits. Meanwhile, business PACs are banned from contributing.

Massachusetts is also one of a handful of states in the country to prohibit businesses from donating to PACs that can donate to candidates. Under federal campaign finance law, businesses are permitted to fund/administer these types of PACs, as are unions. These laws should not be confused with the landmark Supreme Court case Citizens United, which does not focus on the issue of direct donations to candidates and campaigns.

Due to our state’s campaign finance laws, which legislative leaders failed to reform last year, state law favors unions over individuals and business. This results in an uneven playing field and violates state and federal constitutional guarantees of equal protection, free speech, and free association. The plaintiffs and the Goldwater Institute are challenging Massachusetts’ contribution ban in order to vindicate the constitutional rights of businesses to participate on equal footing with unions and other groups in the political process.

© Paul D. Craney is the executive director of Massachusetts Fiscal Alliance.

LEGAL AID IS AN INVESTMENT WORTH INCREASING

To the Editor:

Thank you for your article about the need for additional civil legal aid funding in Massachusetts (“Advocates call for a \$10M increase next year in Mass civil legal aid budget”, Jan. 30). I am writing to correct any inadvertent misperceptions about civil legal aid the piece may have created. Contrary to an assertion in the story, legal aid helps more than “deadbeat renters.” For example, since 1999, with the assistance of civil legal aid organizations such as Greater Boston Legal Services, the Boston Bar Association has sponsored a “Lawyer for a Day” program in Boston Housing Court in which volunteer attorneys have assisted nearly 16,000 people: tenants and property owners alike.

That concern over the effect increased funding would have on the state’s present budget deficit ignores the contrary

findings of a statewide task force convened in 2013 by the bar association. That task force, composed of legislators, judges, business leaders, legal services representatives and academics, spent 18 months researching the problems and hidden costs that arise because so many people in the state lack access to legal assistance. After determining that legal aid actually saves the state more than it costs, the task force recommended increasing the state’s investment in civil legal aid by \$30 million. I strongly support taking the first step toward that investment by increasing legal aid funding this year by \$10 million. It is clear that, now more than ever, we need more civil legal aid resources in Massachusetts.

Samuel Moskowitz is a shareholder in Davis Malm & D’Agostine PC.

MEET YOUR MENTOR

BIZWOMEN MENTORING MONDAY

This speed mentoring morning will consist of meetings between mentors and attendees, each lasting seven minutes. Our mentors are local business experts in a variety of fields. Rotate among mentors for Q&A and review your business materials. Don’t miss the unique opportunity to meet and connect with local business leaders!

Check out the mentors who will be attending our event!

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| Martha Reiss Acworth Salem Five Bank | Kip Hollister Hollister Staffing | Mary Beth McMahon Special Olympics Massachusetts |
| Jodi Baier Center for Women & Enterprise | Susan Klink DeLoitte | Diana Pisciotta Denterlein |
| Liz Brunner Brunner Communications | Mary Beth LaFauci USI Insurance Services | Kathleen Porter Robinson & Cole LLP |
| Kate Carleton Northeastern University | Catherine Latham CBIZ Tofias | Merill S. Puopolo CBIZ Tofias |
| Margaret Coughlin Boston Children’s Hospital | Rebecca Lee Edward Wildman | Barbara Reilly Arnold Worldwide |
| Clare Cox Tidemark | Donna Levin Care.com | Emily Reichert GreenTown Labs |
| Debra Drapala Webster Bank | Vivien Li The Boston Harbor Association | Maureen Rystorm J. Calnan & Associates, Inc. |
| Ronit Enos Maximo Salon | Sandy Lish The Castle Group | Jo Ann Simons Cardinal Cushing Centers |
| Jlene Fischer Women Lead Inc. | Gayle Manganello PNC | Karen Smith CohnReznick |
| Carol Fulp The Partnership, Inc. | Jayne Mattson Keystone Associates | Diane Stevenson Genesis HR Solutions |
| Carolyn Green New England Women in Science Executive Club | Pam McDermott McDermott Ventures | Kim Zayotti Blue Sky Sports & Entertainment, LLC |
| Windsor Hanger Her Campus | Nadia K. McKay Mom Corps Boston | |

bizwomen
BOSTON BUSINESS JOURNAL
MENTORING MONDAY



KEYNOTE:
CAROL FULP
President and CEO,
The Partnership, Inc.

Monday, March 30, 2015 • 7:30-9:30AM
Location: Sheraton Boston Hotel

BOSTON BUSINESS JOURNAL

Register today at
bizjournals.com/boston/event/119341

National Sponsors



Local Sponsors



Partners

