

Five representatives, 2 from New Bedford, vote against amendments to provide tax relief to Massachusetts residents

In April Massachusetts Department of Revenue tax collectors hauled in more than \$2 billion more than what was expected during the month, giving Gov. Charlie Baker cause to press his case for the Legislature to take up his proposals to provide roughly \$700 million in tax relief to residents.

Collections last month added up to \$6.941 billion, \$3.076 billion or nearly 80 percent more than what was collected in April 2021 and \$2.057 billion or just over 42 percent more than DOR's own monthly benchmark.

Baker said it troubles him, for instance, that the threshold to pay income taxes is lower at the federal level than it is in Massachusetts. Part of his plan would exempt more low-income households from state income tax liability.

Baker also said that Massachusetts has "never been more protected against a downturn than we are right now," with a "rainy day" fund that could potentially top \$6 billion by the end of this fiscal year, with more expected to be deposited into reserves through the fiscal year 2023 budget under consideration.

Baker proposed a series of estate, capital gains, rent and senior property tax reforms that the Legislature has neither ruled in or out, but legislative Democrats have focused on investing and saving over-budget revenues and repeatedly rejected attempts to suspend the state's gas tax during a

period of high fuel prices and surging tax revenues.

In spite of this five South Coast Massachusetts representatives, Rep. Tony Cabral (D-New Bedford), Rep. Chris Hendricks (D-New Bedford), Rep. Carole Fiola (D-Fall River), Rep. Paul Schmid (D-Westport), and Rep. Bill Straus (D-Mattapoisett) all voted against amendments to provide tax relief to Commonwealth taxpayers.

Rep. Alan Silvia (D-Fall River) supported amendments to the House budget proposal that would have given tax breaks to renters and seniors and suspended the Commonwealth's 24 cents per gallon gas tax, something Sen. Mark Montigny (D-New Bedford) also supports.