

NO *on* **QUESTION 3**

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Committee Formed to Encourage “No” Vote on Massachusetts Food Tax *Anti-Poverty Advocates and Farmers Come Together in Opposition*

September 28, 2016 (BOSTON, Mass.) -- Commonwealth farmers and anti-poverty advocates have formed the Citizens Against Food Tax Injustice to formally oppose Question 3, a measure that will drive up consumer food prices. Question 3 will be considered by Massachusetts voters on the November 8 ballot.

“Intentionally missing from the ballot statement is that Question 3 is, in fact, a food tax that seeks to steal affordable food choices that most of us make, causing undue harm to the hundreds of thousands of residents in the Commonwealth who already struggle to feed themselves and their families,” said Diane Sullivan, a formerly homeless, Medford mother who has been advocating on behalf of low-income households for 14 years.

Based on a more modest mandate passed in California, Cornell University economists estimate, if the ballot measure were to pass, it would cost Massachusetts citizens \$249 million in higher food prices the first year alone. The wholesale price spread between California and national eggs shows prices in California 89 percent higher than the rest of the nation in 2016 based on data provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Shell Egg Index Price Report.

Question 3 is backed by over \$1.5 million, with nearly 95 percent of the total funding coming from deep-pocketed Washington, D.C.-, New York-, and California-based animal rights industry partners.

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The following organizations make up the Citizens Against Food Tax Injustice:

- Massachusetts Farm Bureau
- National Association of Egg Farmers
- National Pork Producers Council
- New England Brown Egg Council
- Northeast Agribusiness and Feed Alliance
- Protect the Harvest
- Retailers Association of Massachusetts

Question 3 prescribes specific animal housing methods rather than welfare standards and is without the support of the Massachusetts Veterinary Medical Association. Farmers, veterinarians and academic experts predict negative consequences if the initiative is approved, including higher animal injury and mortality rates due to bullying and aggressive behavior and greater exposure of table eggs to chicken manure and other waste.

“My personal experience with poverty and professional work in policy has shown me that when we seek out problems to suit a special interest solution, somebody has something personal to gain while the poor suffer the consequences,” said Sullivan. “Question 3 represents the very injustice of this imbalance in power and influence.”

For more information, go to www.stopfoodtax.com.

***Source:** The Implications of Interstate Commerce Restrictions on Retail Egg and Pork Prices and Demand; Kaiser, Cornell University, January 29, 2016