



\$2.5 BILLION IN COVID RELIEF FUNDS MISAPPROPRIATED BY MASSACHUSETTS OFFICIALS

A Disturbing Pattern Emerges:

The Boston Herald announced on June 2nd that state officials have misappropriated \$2,500,000,000 of federal Covid-19 relief funds. The misappropriation began in 2020 when the state labor department withdrew \$2.5 B to cover the cost of unemployment claims. The Massachusetts Unemployment Trust Fund should have covered these costs, as it always does. Yet, officials managed to sneak this 2.5 Billion dollar "*mistake*" past multiple audits by multiple independent entities over multiple years. This "*mistake*" even made it past an outside accounting firm that was tasked with reviewing the State Unemployment Trust Fund. It seems that there is something fishy, not only in Brookline, but across the state of Massachusetts.

This pattern of elected officials, who are public servants, elected by the people, and paid by our taxes, making monstrous oversights with Covid-19 relief funds is becoming more and more prevalent. How is it that those whose job it is to know these documents and guidelines in and out, can simply spend billions designated for relief for their constituents? This isn't a matter of thousands, or even millions, this is BILLIONS of dollars that tax payers are being robbed of. Now, the conversation has shifted to, how will this "*mistake*" be corrected? Already many financial, business, and MA resident advocacy groups have strongly stated that this cannot fall on the hands of innocent tax payers and employers. Massachusetts already has a reputation of being un hospitable to small businesses. To raise the unemployment insurance tax, for example, would put the burden of rectifying this billion dollar mistake on the shoulders of small business owners that have barely made it through the pandemic. The state administration cannot steal funds meant to assist residents with the impacts of the pandemic, and then make residents pay for the state's "*mistake*".

Even more disturbing, this is not an isolated incident. All those that have misappropriated Covid-19 relief funds must be held accountable. The ACLU has even called for the U.S. Treasury Department to investigate State uses of ARPA funds. It is not possible for this to be a simple mistake, and one that is being repeated over and over again. These elected officials are attempting to line their own pockets and interests with the people's Covid-19 relief funds. Instead of talks about holding elected officials accountable, we instead see conversations about whether or not the ramifications of these officials' "*mistakes*" should land on us.