

Press Release

For Immediate Release
April 14, 2015

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How Much Power is Too Much?

Speaker DeLeo's recent editorial raises more questions than it resolves

Boston, MA: The Massachusetts Fiscal Alliance, a nonpartisan, nonprofit advocacy organization dedicated to promoting fiscal responsibility and transparency in state government, today expressed its support for proposed changes to the state legislature's committee structure as a way of lessening the concentration of power within leadership and promoting transparency in the lawmaking process.

"For far too long, the legislature has run at the whim of the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate," said Paul Craney, the group's executive director. **"Now, with Senate President Rosenberg taking positive steps toward increased debate, it's particularly disappointing to see House leadership resist these changes."**

Most recently, Speaker DeLeo penned an op-ed in which he criticized Senate plans to end the legislature's joint committee structure, in which members of both the House and Senate serve on most committees, if the House continues to obstruct a rules change allowing bills sponsored by individual senators to be released from committee by a majority vote of the senators assigned to that committee. All legislation would, of course, still need to pass both the House and Senate before being presented to the governor.

"It's especially curious that Speaker DeLeo would rely so much on the notion that, in his words, 'some bills need a closer look.' In fact, the Senate's proposal would ensure that fewer bills are buried in committee and more proposals get any type of look at all. It's seemingly not enough to control the House; rather, the Speaker wants the power to control the flow of legislation for all of Beacon Hill, raising a simple question: how much power is too much to have vested in one person?" Craney concluded.

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