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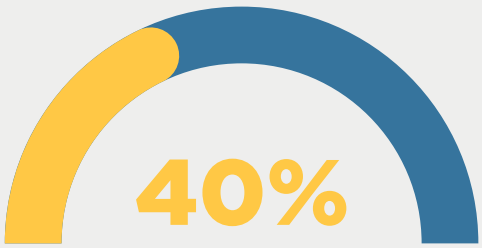
Public Safety Depends on Property Taxes

Public safety in North Carolina's cities and towns depends on property tax dollars. In most of our large and medium-sized cities — where a substantial percentage of North Carolinians live — major portions of municipal general fund budgets go toward police, fire and other public safety services.

North Carolina simply cannot provide residents with the safe communities that they expect and deserve without a system of property taxation that allows for those needs to be met.

As state lawmakers consider proposals that would restrict local property taxes, it is important to know:



Portion of municipalities' general fund budget for public safety spending

SINCE 2022:

31% increase in public safety spending

33% increase in entry level police officers' market rate salaries

50% increase in cost of firetrucks and other similar vehicles

- Public safety spending among North Carolina cities and towns generally equals or exceeds 40% of those municipalities' general fund budgets.
- Over the last five years, public safety spending by North Carolina's largest nine municipalities has kept pace with or exceeded the growth in general fund operations. Those municipalities saw public safety spending rise by an average of 31% since 2022, an average annual increase of more than 6%. Those cities spend an average of 47.24% of their general fund budgets on public safety.
- During this same period, entry level police officers' market rate salaries have risen by 33%. The cost of firetrucks and other similar vehicles — for ALL cities and towns — has increased by roughly 50%.
- In the state's largest nine cities, public safety spending has generally risen faster than other categories of spending since 2022. New state limits on property taxes will almost certainly reverse that trend.
- Any significant cuts to property taxes will compromise local leaders' ability to keep communities safe.

Let state legislators know that new state-imposed restrictions on property taxes will ultimately mean fewer resources to keep our communities safe.