The following report is from MRLDA Lobbyist, Patrick Huntington of Mass Bay Associates.

**Issues Update:**

**Paid Leave Collections Delayed**
The start date for the collection of the payroll tax that will be used to fund the new paid family and medical leave benefits has been delayed from July 1st to October 1st in order to give employers more time to make the necessary adjustments to their payroll processing systems. The previous contribution rate will be increased from 0.63 to 0.75 percent in order to make up for the three months of lost collections. The eligibility for 20 weeks of medical leave benefits will begin on January 1, 2021 while the eligibility for 12 weeks of family leave benefits will begin on July 1, 2021.

**Labor Advocates Seek to Restore Time and a Half Bonus Pay**
Representative of labor union and other employee advocacy groups are pushing for the passage of legislation that will repeal the scheduled reduction and eventual elimination of bonus pay for employees who work on Sundays and holidays. The supporters of this new legislation are threatening to reinstate the Sunday and Holiday pay through a ballot question if the Legislature fails to pass their proposal. A proposed ballot question to restore the bonus pay will likely cause the Retailers Association of Massachusetts to reintroduce their proposal to reduce the sales tax rate.

**Legisaltors Push for Millionaires Tax**
The proposal to increase the income tax from 5 to 9 percent for individuals and S Corporations with incomes over $1 million has once again been moved forward by the Legislature meeting in a Joint Constitutional Convention in June. The proposal was estimated to increase income tax collections by $2 billion and would have earmarked the funds for education and transportation projects. Opponents of the tax increase estimate that 20,000 individuals will face an average increase of $178,000 under this proposal. The Legislature will need to approve this measure for a second time in 2020 before it can be placed on the state-wide ballot in 2022.

**Local Officials Seek More Community Preservations Funds**
Municipal officials from across the state attended a hearing at the State House to urge the Legislature to appropriate more money to help match the funds raised through local option assessments to fund the Community Preservation Act Program. When the CPA was created the law provided for a 100 percent match for all monies raised at the local level. However, since that time most communities have implemented the CPA and the amount of money available to pay for the match has been significantly reduced. Communities raised $160 million last year but only received $24 million in matching grants. Under the law, cities and towns can use the funds to preserve open space land, restore historic buildings and build new playgrounds and athletic fields.

**MRLDA Holds Annual Lobby Day**
On Wednesday, June 5th fourteen MRLDA members and staff from the NRLA participated in the MRLDA’s Annual Lobby Day at the State House in Boston. After a morning board meeting the participants met with members of the House and Senate along with their staff to discuss the issues of importance to our membership. The priority issues discussed included our support for our proposed change to the Mechanic’s Lien Law, support for taxing the sales made through the internet to Massachusetts residents, our opposition to the proposal to regulate employee schedules and the plan to require delivery vehicles to be equipped with under carriage side guards that could adversely impact the utility of those vehicles. The participation by MRLDA member enables the association to develop and nurture relationships with our local legislators to seek their help as allies with our efforts to make our voice heard on Beacon Hill. Any member who wishes to host a tour for their local legislators is urged to contact the NRLA staff for assistance.

**Questions?**
Please contact Kirk Ives, Director of Government Affairs at 518-880-6376 or kives@nrla.org.

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**Take Action!**
Sign up to be an NRLA Advocate by texting the word “NRLA” to 52886

It’s quick and easy, and will let you reach your legislators through email, phone, or social media with just a few simple clicks.

**Did You Know?**
MRLDA members collect over $123 million in sales tax revenue for the State.