



Follow the example of Pike plaintiffs

(Opinion) There are slightly more than a dozen folks from our immediate area who have signed onto the class action lawsuit asking the Massachusetts Turnpike Authority to reimburse millions of dollars to toll-payers. The suit also seeks changes in how the tolls are used; specifically, the suit alleges the money is being used to pay for the Big Dig, and not for the cost of using the turnpike, according to Jan Schlichtmann, the lawyer representing the plaintiffs.

We can only say one thing: Keep up the good fight!

The word “reform” has been bandied about quite a bit here in the Bay State. Gov. Deval Patrick, for example, struck a tough pose during the budget process, saying he would not sign off unless it included “real reform.” Well, it does include some reform, but the Mass Pike tolls are not part of it. Critics argue there isn’t nearly enough reform included, but that should come as no surprise in a state whose lawmakers have a demonstrated history of looking out for their own best interests.

Whether the 1,500-plus plaintiffs in this particular case are successful remains to be seen. That so many folks have decided there mad as hell and they’re not going to take it anymore, however, is heartening.

A message — multiple messages, actually — has to be sent to Beacon Hill. For too long, taxpayers have been content to sit back and merely gripe about living in “Taxachusetts,” but when it comes time for action — real action — we elect the same lawmakers. Even when we’re lied to, ignored and whatever else they feel like doing at the moment — despite all that, we send the same polls back year after year. Part of that is because there aren’t enough people willing to challenge them for their seats.

The other part of the problem, however, is that while it’s easy to moan and groan and gripe about our lot in life, it’s much harder to actually stand up and fight. That takes effort.

The plaintiffs in this lawsuit are putting forth that effort. Would that so many others among us would follow in their footsteps.