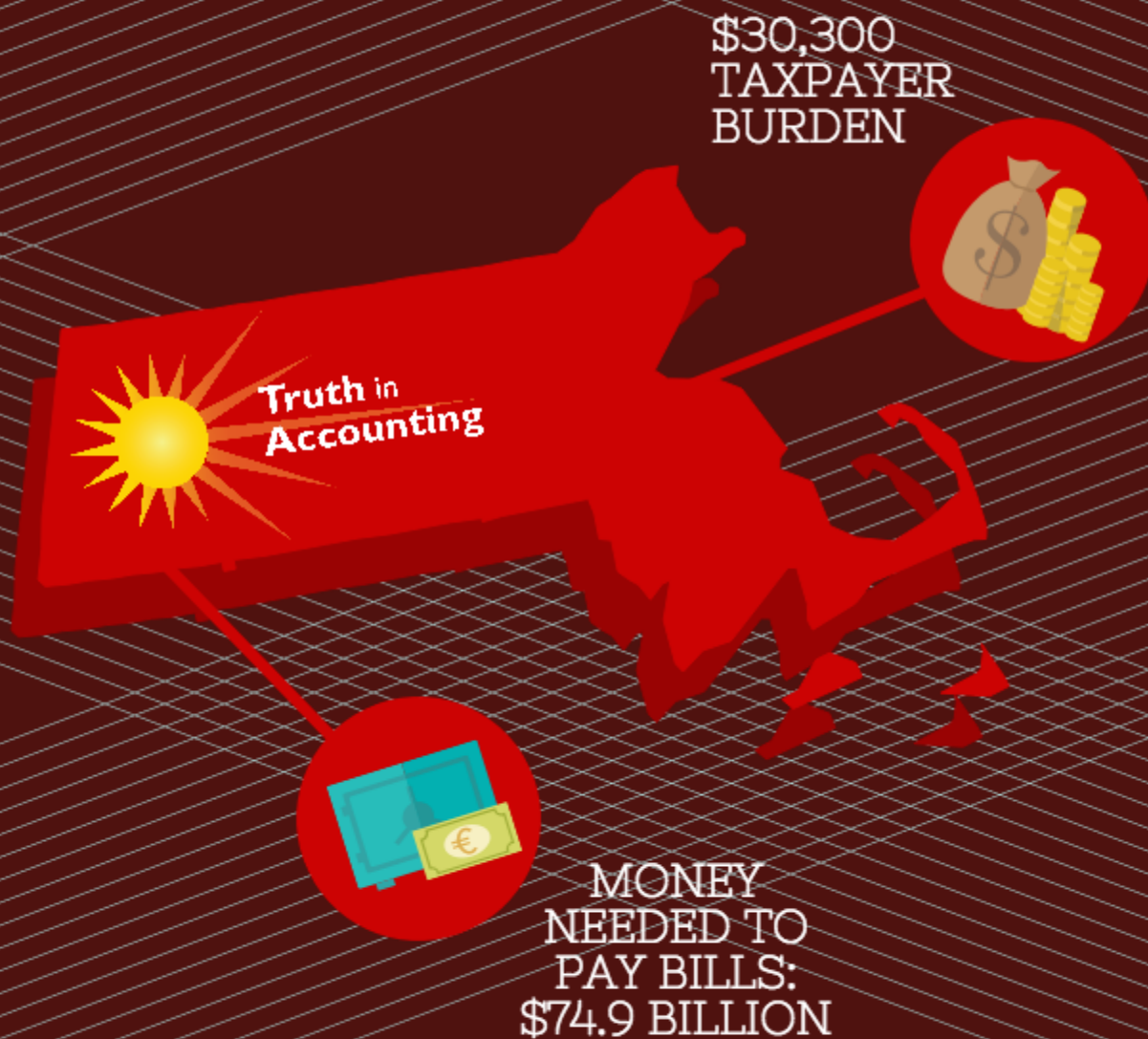


Financial state of the state

46 MASSACHUSETTS



THE FINANCIAL STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS

Why did Massachusetts' reported pension debt increase by \$24 billion this year?

Because of a new accounting rule, Massachusetts now has to report its pension debt on its balance sheet. As a result, the commonwealth's reported pension debt grew from \$2.4 billion in 2014 to \$26.3 billion in 2015. However, the commonwealth is still hiding \$6.4 billion of pension debt from taxpayers.

For years, Truth in Accounting has called for this financial reporting change, and we welcome the shift towards more transparent accounting.

The commonwealth's bills exceed its assets

Assets	\$73,281,877,000
Minus: <i>Capital assets</i>	-\$45,439,856,000
<i>Restricted assets</i>	-\$6,853,763,000
Assets available to pay bills	\$20,988,258,000
Minus: <i>Bills</i>	-\$95,854,709,000
Money needed to pay bills	-\$74,866,451,000
Each taxpayer's share of this debt	-\$30,300

Massachusetts has \$73.3 billion in assets, but most of these assets are not available to pay commonwealth bills.

The \$45.4 billion of capital assets, such as roads, buildings, and land should not be sold to pay bills. The use of \$6.9 billion of the assets is restricted by law or contract.

That leaves \$21 billion of the commonwealth's assets available to pay \$95.9 billion of bills as they come due.

The -\$74.9 billion shortfall represents compensation and other costs incurred in prior years that should have been paid in those years. Instead these costs have been shifted to future taxpayers.



Truth in Accounting is committed to educating and empowering citizens with understandable, reliable, and transparent government financial information.

To be knowledgeable participants in their government and its budget process, citizens need to be provided with truthful and transparent financial information.

Key findings

- Massachusetts has only \$21 billion available to pay \$95.9 billion worth of bills. Therefore, the commonwealth has a -\$74.9 billion financial hole.
- Massachusetts has a taxpayer burden of -\$30,300, which is each taxpayer's share of the commonwealth's unfunded debt.
- Despite reporting most of its pension debt, the commonwealth still continues to hide most of its retiree health care debt. The commonwealth's total hidden debt is \$18.1 billion.

The bills Massachusetts has accumulated

Bonds	\$47,230,069,000
Other liabilities	\$13,167,347,000
Minus: <i>Debt related to capital assets</i>	-\$15,457,448,000
Unfunded pension benefits	\$32,694,531,000
Unfunded retiree health care benefits	\$18,220,210,000
Bills	\$95,854,709,000

Despite the balanced budget requirement, the commonwealth has accumulated bonded debt of \$47.2 billion and other liabilities of \$13.2 billion. The calculation of assets available to pay bills does not include capital assets, so \$15.5 billion of related debt is removed from the calculation of commonwealth bills.

Unfunded employees' retirement benefits represent 53% of commonwealth bills. These unfunded liabilities have accumulated because commonwealth employees have been promised \$32.7 billion of pension benefits and \$18.2 billion of retiree health care benefits, but the commonwealth has not adequately funded them.

Unless these pension and retiree health care benefits are renegotiated, future taxpayers will be burdened with paying for these benefits without receiving any corresponding government services or benefits.

Data is derived from the commonwealth of Massachusetts' June 30, 2015 audited Comprehensive Annual Financial Report and retirement plans' actuarial reports.

Number of taxpayers is based on an estimation of the commonwealth's population with a federal tax liability.

www.TruthInAccounting.org

www.StateDataLab.org