

# ARTICLE 31: HOME RULE LEGISLATION / CHAPTER 61B EXEMPTION

Town Meeting Handout | Carmine Granucci, Town Meeting Member, Precinct 21

## What This Article Does

Authorizes the Select Board to file a home rule petition exempting Arlington from granting Chapter 61B tax classifications to private country clubs. Chapter 61B provides a **75% reduction in assessed value** for recreational land. It was designed for farms and open spaces, but private country clubs have used it to dramatically reduce their tax obligations.

**Article 31** preserves the Town's right of first refusal and ability to collect roll-back taxes on existing 61B land. It only affects future applications. Under 61B's 5-acre minimum requirement, **only these two country clubs qualify in Arlington.**

## The Tax Disparity (Land-Only, FY2026)

Property	Tax Per Acre	vs. Residential
Belmont CC (61B Exemption)	~\$545	1.5%
Winchester CC (Golf, No 61B)	~\$4,495	13%
Arlington Residential (Land Only)	~\$35,258	100%

Source: Arlington Assessor FY2026 data. Residential figure based on land-only assessed values for sample Arlington single-family homes.

## Revenue Impact

Scenario	Annual Impact
Belmont CC: additional revenue if 61B removed	+\$18,254
Winchester CC: revenue at risk if they re-enroll in 61B	-\$24,964
Total annual revenue at stake	\$43,218

Revenue estimates provided by the Town Manager's Office and Director of Assessments using the Board of Assessors' land valuation methodology.

## Why Act Now: The Revolving Door

61B applications are filed annually. Winchester CC has toggled in and out of 61B multiple times: full 61B (1992–2003), dropped it (2004–2008), split the property to put 40 acres back on 61B at just \$150K–\$300K (2009–2025), then dropped it again for 2026. **Without Article 31, nothing prevents either club from reapplying next year.**

## Institutional Support

<b>Select Board</b> 3-1 Favorable Action (1 recusal)	<b>Board of Assessors</b> Unanimous Support
---	--

**Precedent:** Belmont passed 229-3 (Nov 2023, filed as H.3970). Swampscott passed March 2024 (H.3917, reported favorably by Joint Committee on Revenue). Arlington would be the third town to act.

**A private country club should not receive a 75% tax discount while Arlington homeowners are asked to pay more through overrides. Everyone should pay their fair share. Please vote YES on Article 31.**