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THAT CERTAINTY OF LIFE: TAXES

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## Policy and public health

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THANK YOU to Renée Loth for moving beyond the hype on the so-called sugar tax ("[The sweet taste of taxes](#)," Op-ed, Feb. 5). We applaud Governor Patrick for proposing to reform a number of tax exemptions, including the sales tax exemption for soda and candy. Some tax exemptions and credits should be protected, such as exempting most clothing and food from the sales tax because it is a necessity of daily life. However, many of the exemptions and credits on the books - totaling more than \$20 billion - serve no compelling purpose. In our current economy, maintaining these exemptions results in deeper cuts for schools, roads, and public health.

Eliminating the soda and candy exemption is important because it would create a financial incentive, particularly to price-sensitive teenagers, not to use products that wreak havoc on health and that contribute to the chronic diseases driving skyrocketing health care costs. This change would raise nearly \$52 million, funds the governor proposes to use in part for programs to keep young people healthy. That's an investment we should all get behind.

Valerie Bassett

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