

LETTERS

# Mass. film tax credits are drawing scrutiny



CRAIG F. WALKER/GLOBE STAFF/FILE 2016

Mark Wahlberg filming a scene for “Patriots Day” in Boston. The project collected \$15.7 million worth of tax credits from the state, according to new data.

| JANUARY 15, 2019

## Mass. is epicenter of documentary film — if only this tax program cared

As a Massachusetts filmmaker, I read with interest the story by reporters Matt Stout and Matt Rocheleau documenting how the Massachusetts tax subsidy program has benefited Hollywood productions shot in our state ([“State gave out \\$89m in film credits, the most ever,”](#) Page A1, Jan. 9). I would encourage a second story in which the reporters investigate how the tax subsidies are helping, or not helping, films made locally, by actual in-state filmmakers. Surely, we should be the first target, not runaway studio productions.

Nobody in the political realm in Massachusetts — neither Democrat nor Republican

nobody in the political team in Massachusetts, neither Democrat nor Republican, takes notice of the fact that this state is world-renowned as the epicenter of film documentary, from legendary filmmakers Ricky Leacock and Ed Pincus at MIT; through the personal documentaries of Ross McElwee, Robb Moss, and Alfred Guzzetti at Harvard; through “Eyes on the Prize” and other classics at WGBH; through extraordinary women documentarians such as Mary Jane Doherty, Lucia Small, Jane Gillooly, Nancy Porter, Jeanne Jordan, and Allie Humenuk; through the acclaimed nonfiction filmmakers Errol Morris and Frederick Wiseman.

If anything, the state should find ways to honor and nurture our own amazing Massachusetts documentary community. That’s where our subsidies should go first, not to Mark Wahlberg (\$15.7 million in credits) to make “Patriots Day.”

Gerald Peary

Cambridge

*The writer, also a film critic, has made the feature documentaries “For the Love of Movies: The Story of American Film Criticism” and “Archie’s Betty.”*

### **Film industry’s positive impact is keenly felt by area nonprofits**

I found your article on the film tax incentive incomplete. Beyond all the money the film industry infuses into the local economy and the local people it employs, filmmakers bring relief to the many citizens of Massachusetts who live in poverty or have experienced unthinkable traumas.

I run the nonprofit Project Home Again. Each year, the film industry donates the contents of their sets to us and other local nonprofits when shooting ends. Last week we received six truckloads of furniture, home furnishings, and toiletries from three different movie productions. We will distribute them, free of charge, to the clients who are referred to us by the more than 400 social workers with whom we partner. This allows the often voiceless to live with the comfort and dignity they deserve.

For a woman who is a domestic abuse survivor struggling with self-esteem issues, receiving brand-new, beautiful furniture is life-changing. Many of the items we received will go into the homes of the gas line fire victims when they find permanent housing. It would have taken us about a year to pick up all the furniture and household goods dropped off last week alone. There is no way we would ever be able to find

donations of this quantity or caliber if the film industry leaves Massachusetts. This issue is about much more than tax dollars.

Nancy Kanell

President and founder

Project Home Again

Lawrence