



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

William Larkin

Larkin Fights For Property Tax Relief

William J. Larkin Jr.

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Dear Editor:

For the past several years, my colleagues and I in the Senate Majority have passed numerous bills to give hardworking New Yorkers much needed property tax relief. The STAR Exemption and the STAR Rebate Programs are two of the more significant measures we enacted to save homeowners billions of dollars. Although the STAR Program has helped many individuals and families, we recognize that more needs to be done to assist homeowners in their struggle against high property taxes. Space constraints restrict me from discussing all of the many bills the Senate Majority pushed for this year to lower homeowners' property taxes, however, below are a few of the more important property tax relief measures that we fought for and passed this year:

S.6417, this bill would have doubled the size of direct property tax rebate checks for senior citizen homeowners this year, tripled the size of property tax rebate checks for all homeowners in 2008 and quadrupled the size in 2009. It would also eliminate the burdensome STAR application process.

S.245-A, this bill would (after municipal approval) exempt senior homeowners (75 years of age and older) who have no children in school and who have lived in the school district for thirty years or more from having to pay school taxes.

S.6119, known as the New York "Stop Taxing Our Property" (NY-STOP) Reform Package, is the only real plan introduced this year to completely restructure the school property tax system, giving school districts (after a public vote) the authority to eliminate residential property taxes over five years with revenue replaced by additional state funding. It also imposes an immediate freeze on property tax assessments for seniors; creates a Blue Ribbon Commission on Property Tax Reform and enacts measures to help lower costs for school districts and municipalities.

Unfortunately, all of these bills died in the Assembly.

While the Senate keeps fighting for property tax relief, the Assembly and the Governor remain idle and watch as New Yorkers suffer from ridiculously high property tax bills. The Senate has listened to the residents of New York and has repeatedly passed bills to ease the burden of some of the highest property taxes in the nation. The fact of the matter is that these bills should have and could have been enacted. But the Governor and the Assembly were missing in action. None of these bills were even brought to the Assembly floor for a vote.

When it comes to high property taxes, the Senate Majority is fighting for New Yorkers without vital cooperation from the Assembly and without any Executive leadership. My colleagues and I in the Senate Majority have put forth proposal after proposal to give the people in this state a real break from their property taxes, and we will not give up this fight despite the Assembly's and the Governor's indifference to this issue.

As the 2008 Legislative Session approaches, the Senate Majority will again make it clear that property tax relief for every homeowner in New York State is our number one priority.

Sincerely,
William J. Larkin