



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

David J. Valesky

# **Senate Passes Valesky Legislation Creating Land Banks to Spur Redevelopment**

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SYRACUSE, N.Y.— The State Senate passed legislation (S.4281A) sponsored by Senator David J. Valesky (D-Oneida) that will allow municipalities to create land banks in order to fight urban blight and revitalize communities.

“The large number of abandoned and vacant properties has contributed to low property values and poor economic growth in Upstate cities,” said Senator Valesky. “The creation of land banks will foster economic revitalization and improve the quality of life in our cities and neighborhoods.”

Land banks are not-for-profit entities created by local governments that may hold, manage and develop tax-foreclosed property, vacant, or blighted property. Land

banks act as legal and financial mechanisms to transform these properties back to productive use. The use of land banks can encourage private development and help revitalize neighborhoods.

Vacant and abandoned properties that often are associated with crime, fire, and disease have directly contributed to severe drops in real property values in Upstate cities, leaving local municipalities to bear the cost of demolition, safety hazards, and spreading deterioration of neighborhoods resulting in mortgage foreclosure. By rehabilitating these areas, Upstate cities will be able to mitigate the effects of urban deterioration.

Locally, the number of vacant properties is increasing. In the city of Syracuse, there are currently approximately 1,600 vacant residential properties, an increase from 1,000 in 1999. One in five homes in three census tracts on the South Side of the city are vacant. In the City of Auburn there are over 750 vacant properties.

“Land banks have been proven across the country to provide a comprehensive and community-based approach to the acquisition, management, and disposition of vacant and tax delinquent properties,” said City of Syracuse Mayor Stephanie A. Miner. “I strongly believe the efficiency and predictability that land banks provide will help create new opportunities for redevelopment and community revitalization throughout Syracuse and Central New York, and I applaud Senator Valesky, Assemblyman Hoyt, and our entire Central New York delegation for their leadership on this important issue.”

“Auburn as in most Upstate cities has an over abundance of vacant and tax delinquent properties,” said City of Auburn Mayor Michael Quill. “Through use of land banks, most of these structures can become a showcase for their neighborhoods, while at the same time paying their fair share of property taxes. We thank Senator Valesky for his efforts to help revitalize our neighborhoods.”

If signed into law, New York would join several states, including Michigan, Maryland and Ohio, to adopt statewide land bank legislation.