



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jack M. Martins

From the Desk of Senator Jack M. Martins

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| ISSUE: **LOCAL GOVERNMENT, STAR (SCHOOL TAX RELIEF PROGRAM)**

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How to Keep Your STAR Property Tax Rebate

If you receive a STAR rebate check for your property taxes, please, please, read this column! It's vital news to Long Island homeowners.

New legislation requires that ALL homeowners receiving a Basic STAR exemption re-apply with the New York State Tax Department in order to continue receiving the exemption in 2014 and beyond. This is part of an enormous effort to root out fraud in the \$1.9 billion system and it was enacted to protect honest New Yorkers against those who are falsely obtaining the exemption. In the end, they are stealing from you – the taxpayer.

The re-application process will take place now until December 31, 2013 and beginning later this month, the State Tax Department will mail detailed instructions to all current Basic STAR recipients on how to register. The letter will include a personalized code that homeowners will need to reapply online at the state's website or over the phone. The registration process will simply require homeowners to provide some basic information to confirm their eligibility for the STAR program.

Here are a few other key points to be aware of:

- This is a one-time process. Basic STAR recipients will not need to re-register every year.
- Senior citizens who receive the Enhanced STAR exemption are not affected by the new registration requirement and nothing will change for them.
- Questions about the registration process can be answered by calling the State Tax Department at (518) 457-2036.

New York has some of the highest property taxes in the nation, and this program takes away some of that pain. You'll recall that STAR was taken away under the prior administration but my senate colleagues and I fought to have it restored for you. In 2012 alone, we saved homeowners an average \$700 per year through the program. That's why I want to be absolutely sure that you file your paperwork in a timely fashion and keep your rebate checks coming.

Please, do not let this fall by the wayside. Keep an eye out for your registration instructions in the mail and re-apply as soon as possible. As always, if I can be of any help please don't hesitate to call me at (516) 746-5924