



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

George D. Maziarz

## Message from Senator Maziarz: To continue to get tax relief, Basic STAR recipients must re-register

GEORGE D. MAZIARZ August 28, 2013

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

I have some very important news to share with homeowners in Western New York. If you are a homeowner who receives a Basic STAR exemption for your school property taxes, you will need to register with the NYS Department of Taxation and Finance to keep getting the STAR exemption in 2014 and beyond. This is part of a new effort to eliminate fraud and protect property taxpayers.

Here's what will happen: 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 register on-line 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 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 asked by calling the State Tax Department at (518) 457-2036.

A recent State Comptroller's report showed that taxpayers are being cheated out of tens of millions of dollars every year by individuals who are fraudulently obtaining STAR exemptions for their property. This statewide accountability effort is being undertaken to weed out that abuse. Most homeowners are doing the right thing, but when someone takes advantage of the system everyone else has to pay more in school taxes. That's not fair or legal.

I'm glad to share this important update with you. Of course, you can always contact me with any questions or concerns you may have.