



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael H. Ranzenhofer

Property Tax Cap Renewal Secures Continued Savings, Prevents Spiraling Tax Increases for Years to Come

MICHAEL H. RANZENHOFER July 15, 2015

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Look for...

Senator Mike Ranzenhofer's
Monthly Column

...In your local newspaper
the third week of every month

By: Michael H. Ranzenhofer

I am pleased to report that one of my top legislative priorities, extending the property tax cap, has been accomplished during the final days of the 2015 Legislative Session.

Residents all across the 61st Senate District have stressed the importance of renewing the tax cap. In fact, three out of every four residents expressed to me their support for making the property tax cap permanent in a recent Constituent Questionnaire.

As you may know, if the State Legislature did not act by next year, the property tax cap would have expired. It was absolutely imperative to extend this tax saving measure sooner rather than later. In my opinion, waiting another year to extend the cap would have put its future in jeopardy.

Now, under the new law, the tax cap has been extended to 2020. Renewing the tax cap protects property owners from a return to the days of skyrocketing budgets and spiraling tax increases. In addition, extending the cap secures continued savings for homeowners on their property tax bills for years to come.

While the property tax cap hasn't solved all of our problems, it has helped to encourage fiscal discipline and keeping a lid on tax increases. In fact, according to a recent study, taxpayers have saved more than \$7.6 billion since the cap was first enacted four years ago. In 2015-16 alone, homeowners are expected to save a total of \$3.3 billion in school taxes.

Fortunately, this isn't the only good news for property taxpayers from this year's session. STAR-eligible homeowners throughout Western New York will be eligible for \$3.1 billion in new property tax rebates over the next few years, starting in 2016.

When the new rebate amounts are combined with the existing tax freeze check planned for next year, a total of \$900 million in property tax relief checks will be sent. In 2019-2020, this new tax relief will be fully phased in and a total of \$1.3 billion will be returned to taxpayers.

The new tax rebate law will help to bolster property tax savings from the STAR program, as well as ongoing savings for local governments.

This year's State Budget approved a record amount, \$3.4 billion, for the STAR and Enhanced STAR programs, two outstanding programs for middle-class families and seniors.

Our local governments will continue to benefit from some mandate relief to help hold down property taxes. As a result of ongoing savings from Medicaid and pension reforms enacted in recent years, local governments will be protected from hundreds of millions of dollars in higher costs this year.

From the extension of the cap to new tax rebates, some progress has been made to help alleviate the challenge of New York's high property taxes. As your State Senator, I will continue to lead the effort to provide property tax relief and more mandate relief to local governments.

Senator Ranzenhofer's monthly column appeared in the Amherst and Clarence Bees on July 15th.