



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Stephen M. Saland

## "stop Taxing Our Property" Reform Plan (ny-stop)

STEPHEN M. SALAND

It is said that the three most important considerations when purchasing property are "location, location and location", however, the three most important issues for Hudson Valley taxpayers are "property taxes, property taxes and property taxes".

Statistics show that New York ranks well above the national average when it comes to real property taxes, and New Yorkers are demanding relief. Many suggestions have been made over the years on how to provide real property tax reform, but there has been no consensus. While measures such as STAR are important, reform is critical to virtually all property owners.

As Chairman of the Senate Education Committee, I am keenly aware of the impact school property taxes have on a community. Under the current system, a homeowner's ability to pay is not the main factor used to calculate their property tax liability. Instead, education funding relies heavily on property tax assessments. And while certain school districts are partially funded through a variety of local taxes, real property taxes constitute the vast majority of local revenue raised to support school districts.

The Senate Majority has passed Senate Bill 6119, which combines a number of reform and relief proposals, the first two of which I introduced and was gratified that they were included in this omnibus bill:

- authorizes voters to determine if school property taxes on primary residences should be phased out over five years and be replaced with additional State funding,
- requires the State to fully fund any mandated program imposed on municipalities or school districts which creates an annual net additional cost in excess of \$10,000 on any individual locality or school district, or a statewide net additional cost of \$1 million or more,
- establishes a Blue Ribbon Commission on Property Tax Reform to study and recommend alternatives to the present education financing system,
- provides financial incentives to localities by tripling (\$5 to \$15 per parcel) the amount of aid the State provides to localities who reassess every three years,
- seniors who are over 65 and earn less than \$100,000 would have their assessments frozen, thereby limiting the growth in their property tax bills. The State would then make up the financial difference to school districts and local governments.

Despite the State's historic STAR program, real property taxes continue to rise throughout New York. I recognize the need to provide relief to hardworking, overburdened taxpayers and urge the Assembly and the Governor to join the Senate to finally address a problem that has too long begged a solution.