



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

## New York State Senate Passes Harckham's STAR Credit Bill of Rights Legislation

PETE HARCKHAM March 18, 2021

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



*Albany, NY* – The New York State Senate passed legislation today, introduced by Senator Pete Harckham, that creates a School Tax Relief (STAR) Credit Bill of Rights and establishes the office of a STAR ombudsman.

This legislation (S.2969) will ensure that taxpayers entitled to a rebate receive timely responses to their inquiries as well as updated access to information regarding their rebate.

Standards for communication with taxpayers will be improved, as well as the efficiency of providing the rebates to the recipients.

“The STAR program has fallen short for many faultless homeowners, and now they will have proper resources to address their problems and complaints,” said Harckham. “The goal here is to save taxpayers money they rightfully deserve and ensure an equitable treatment with prompt and effective assistance.”

Unfortunately, some taxpayers who are entitled to a rebate by means of the STAR Program are required to wait an unnecessary amount of time to receive their rebate checks. When they inquire about their checks, there is often even more delay or just the lack of a response. This puts taxpayers at several disadvantages, including but not limited to, financial hardships.

Harckham’s legislation creates an Office of the STAR Ombudsman. This individual, appointed by the Commissioner of Tax and Finance, would be in charge of an office made up of attorneys or individuals with experience in tax or real estate or a comparable educational background.

This office would be responsible for assigning case numbers to contacts by taxpayers regarding their STAR credit checks and their appeals. Each case will be tracked with information provided to the taxpayers regularly. The tracking system must be published online so taxpayers can follow their cases.

Taxpayers with concerns or problems with their STAR credit would have thirty days to submit an appeal on forms created by the department. The Tax department would have fifteen days to process the appeals. If an individual is successful in their appeal, they would be mailed a check with interest.

The STAR Credit program was created in 2016 and replaced the STAR exemption program for new homeowners. New homeowners are eligible for the credit on their school taxes paid for their primary residence if they make less than \$500,000.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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## 2021-S2969

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Enacts the "STAR credit bill of rights" and establishes the office of STAR ombudsman

January 26, 2021

In Assembly Committee

Sponsored by **Pete Harckham**

Do you support this bill?