

Tax Reform
Action Coalition
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www.trac-il.org

Neighborhood &
Community Groups
Supporting TRAC

Bowmanville
Neighborhood Assn.
Brighton Park Neighborhood
Council

Bucktown Community
Organization

East Lakeview Neighbors

Edgewater Community
Council

Friends of Holstein Park

Greater Rockwell Organization

Hamlin Park
Neighborhood Assn.

Horner Park West
Neighborhood Assn.

Hawthorne Neighbors

Jeferson Park
Neighborhood Assn.

Lake View Citizens' Council

Lakewood Balmoral
Residents Council

Lincoln Central

North Logan Block Club

Northcenter Chamber
of Commerce

Northcenter/Lincoln Square
Neighborhood Assn.

Old Irving Park Association

Portage Park
Neighborhood Assn.

South Lakeview Neighbors

Southport Neighbors

Triangle Neighbors

U.N.I.T.E. Civic

Ukrainian Village
Preservation Society

West DePaul
Neighborhood Assn.

West Walker Association

Wicker Park Committee

Wrightwood Neighbors

TRAC's NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION!

We resolve to continue working on getting the 7% property tax cap renewed through SB2691 and to start pressing for "acquisition based assessing" at the county level.

We hope your resolution is the same! Continue to press your elected officials at the beginning of the year for the passage of SB2691. TRAC will keep you informed via our web site and email. Sign up to receive these "calls to action" at TRAC.president@gmail.com. Just ask to be added to the list!

Make those phone calls right after the first of the year! Let them hear you – loud and clear.... Daley (312) 744- 3300, Madigan (773-581-8000), Blagojevich (312-814-2121),
FIND THE VOTES AND PASS SB2691!

Stay on TRAC!

SUMMARY OF EVENTS AND ACTIONS IN 2006

It has been a year full of "calls to action" beginning with our kick-off "Blizzard of Postcards" campaign in January 2006, all the way through to the latest phone calls to Mayor Daley encouraging him to really come out and work for the renewal of the 7% property tax cap.

As reassessment notices began to arrive in the mail in late spring, TRAC participated in community meetings held by aldermen (to inform property owners about the appeal process.) TRAC rallied the troops to attend one rather raucous standing room only meeting in June in Lakeview. Assessor Houlihan was there and got an earful from a lot of people. To his credit, he stayed and answered every question until the very end of the meeting.

The notices continued to roll through our communities and TRAC initiated a "Rolling Revolt" collecting copies of notices from across the city from May through November. Finally delivering them to Speaker Madigan, Mayor Daley and the Governor in November, when 60 TRAC volunteers marched down LaSalle Street from Mike Madigan's law office, Madigan & Getzendanner – a firm that appeals property taxes for large corporations – over to City Hall to the Mayor's office on the 5th floor and finally over to Governor Blagojevich's office across the street. A poignant message was written on one notice; my increase works out to \$301 dollars a month which is the same amount that I pay for health insurance. Will I have to make a choice sometime?

In September TRAC held a huge community rally at the Boat House in Humboldt Park Chicago Unites for Property Tax Reform. With groups participating from all over the city, we sent a clear message that this is not just a north side issue. Some new groups that have joined the fight are: Archer Heights, Back of the Yards, Chinese's America Service League, M.A.G.I.C – Woodlawn, The Gap – Bronzville to name just a few. We collected postcards from all the participants and ended up sending over 1,200 to the "4 Tops"! (Blagojevich, Daley, Madigan and Jones) – FIND THE VOTES AND PASS THE 7%!

In the fall we began The Count-Down to the Veto Session. Through e-mail notices to our membership, we asked each of you to call certain legislators that voted "no" in the spring session. TRAC heard from many of you that these phone calls produced results – the majority of them changed their votes to "yes" and they ended up supporting the renewal.

BEHIND THE SCENES – OUR OPINION!

Many of you talked to us about media coverage or the lack of...we agreed. TRAC was frustrated because the media deemed it an unimportant issue because of the fall elections. The coverage would begin, they said, when it got closer to the veto session. As we held our "media event" on the eve of the veto session, our **walking caravan** to deliver the reassessment notices, the Mayor held his own press conference the same time to talk about anything but the renewal of the 7%.

A funny thing happened on the way to the renewal of the 7%...

All along we were working on getting SB2691 renewed. This is the bill that was passed by the Senate in the spring. It was sent over to the House that Madigan rules; the bill currently sits in committee (on-hold). Then, all of a sudden, another bill came on the scene in the veto session – SB2300. Folks there is a huge difference between these two bills – A majority of our State Representatives have not come clean on this. They have chosen to ignore the differences and have picked SB2300 to pass.

SB2691 increases the “cap on the cap” from \$20,000 to \$60,000 and offers some additional relief to the veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

SB2300 leaves the “cap on the cap” at \$20,000, does not offer any relief to the veterans and requires some lengthy verbiage to be included on everyone’s tax bill as to whether or not they are paying more or less because of the 7%.

BUT – it didn’t pass either when it was called for a vote in the veto session, despite all the back room deals and exchanging of favors that supposedly were taking place. SOMEONE FORGOT TO REMOVE SOME LANGUAGE FROM THE BILL THAT MADE IT NECESSARY TO HAVE 70+ VOTES AND NOT JUST 60. They called for the vote and it had 61 but not enough to pass it.

The Mayor says he supports the renewal of the 7%. Speaker Madigan says he supports it and even voted for it – maybe because he knew it would fail. So as Ben Joravsky from The Chicago Reader asked, if these guys are for it – why hasn’t it passed? The other question is – which one – SB2691 or SB2300?

TRAC supports the renewal of SB2691 because of the increase cap to \$60,000 and the added benefits for our veterans. This year’s reassessment is 11% higher than the reassessment of 2003. The cap needs to be increased to \$60,000 in order to offer more relief to more homeowners in the city.

So what’s next?

There are 3 days in the beginning of January where we have another chance at getting SB2691 passed. Speaker Madigan needs to get it out of committee and onto the floor – finding the votes and passing it. The dates are Sunday, January 7, Monday, January 8 and Tuesday, January 9. ** TRAC is asking you to continue making those very important phone calls to your state Representative, Mayor Daley (312-744-3300), Governor Blagojevich (312-814-2121) and of course Speaker Madigan (773-581-8000).

Find the votes and pass SB2691!

If we can’t get it done in those 3 days...it is back to the beginning again where a new bill has to be introduced and passed again in both the House and Senate. These guys and gals passed a pay increase for themselves in a “nanno” second, but can’t seem to pass a bill that will save us a bunch of money? Who are they really representing anyway?

A familiar quote comes to mind, “Taxation without representation!”....

BEWARE OF ELECTED OFFICIALS BEARING GIFTS –

There is going to be a lot of talk and pressure applied this year for that “tax swap” plan. The state is in terrible financial trouble as is the city and county. Raising the income tax from 3%, which is where it is now, to 5% is a 67% increase passed unto you. There are plans to spread around the sales tax to include all kinds of services – excluding of course lawyers and legal fees. This will generate a ton of new money. The swap comes into play with a small reduction in the school funding portion of your property tax bill – it comes out to about a 10% reduction in your total bill.

TRAC does not support the current plans for a tax swap (no, we are not against education) but because there is nothing on the table in any of these proposals that stops, yes stops, your assessments from continuing to climb while you also get a 67% income tax hike, we cannot support the “swap.”

More info on this on our web site....

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