

Tax Reform
Action Coalition
867 West Buckingham
Chicago, IL 60657
312-458-9202
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

Jefferson Park
Neighborhood Assn.

Lakeview 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

What is it going to take?

Have you gotten your reassessment notice yet? You know that we started the War of Independence (the one with England) over a mere 2% tax increase on tea! Remember the Boston Tea Party? So will any increase in your property taxes make you angry enough to make a few phone calls? Here are the phone numbers for you to call and complain LOUDLY: Mayor Daley 312-744-3300, Speaker Madigan 773-581-8000 and Governor Blagojevich 312-814-2121. You might want to call Speaker Madigan's law office and ask him if he would appeal YOUR taxes since he worked against passing the 7%! Here's the number at Madigan and Getzendanner Property Tax Appeals Office 312-346-4321.

The Rolling Revolt of '06: We Need You!

Help TRAC keep the issue of unfair property increases on the front burner from now through the fall. Let our elected officials hear you!

TRAC has launched the "**Rolling (Property Tax) Revolt of '06**" As the reassessment notices are "rolling" through the mail and our neighborhoods, TRAC wants to share the pain and keep these frightening increases out in the open. TRAC wants our elected officials at every level to "see" these increases. TRAC wants the media to grasp the level of concern from the people in this city.

The "**Rolling Revolt of '06**" has already begun with Rogers Park Township. Residents there were the first township in the city to get their reassessment notices with increases from 24% on the low end to 107% on the high end. The following dates are for the rest of the cities township mailings for reassessment notices: Lake View 5/22, Lake 6/23, Jefferson 7/27, Hyde Park 9/1, South Chicago 10/6, West Chicago 11/1 and North Chicago 11/27.

You will soon receive your assessment notice. TRAC asks that you send TRAC copies of your reassessment notices with the increases and the names of your state representative and alderman clearly printed on these copies. You can mail them to us or fax them. (See instructions below.)

TRAC will be faxing these assessment notices to all the media outlets from now until the last township is finished! Elected city and state officials will be getting the same notices-and the following message: Pass the 7% and deliver reform within the next year or we will send YOU a message at the polls! TRAC needs a commitment from all of you. We can defeat money and influence if we stand up together and demand reform.

Here's what we need...

- Make a copy of your assessment notice
- Figure out your assessment increase and write it on your assessment notice. (Subtract the old assessed value from the new figure. Divide the difference by the old assessed value = % of increase)
- Include the name of your state representative and alderman
- Send the copy to TRAC either by snail mail or fax. Or turn it into your community group and TRAC will pick them up. TRAC's fax is 773-472-2507 our address is:
TRAC, 867 W. Buckingham, Chicago, IL 60657
- You can take your name off but you do need to leave the PIN and the address on the notice

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Please Get Involved! We need volunteers!

There are three community meetings coming up. We are looking for volunteers to help with the "**Rolling Revolt of '06.**" At these meetings, volunteers will help with distribution of instructional materials and other projects. Your help this summer can make the difference in getting 7% legislation renewed in the fall. To volunteer, call volunteer coordinators Mike O'Hara at 847-455-2277(wk) or 773-588-2347 or Gail Kaplan at 312-751-2347. The locations and dates are:

- Wednesday, June 7, 7:00 p.m., Alderman Schuller/Appeal Session
Bell School, 3750 N. Oakley
- Thursday, June 15, 6:00 p.m., 46 & 48th Ward Appeal Session,
Truman College 1145 W. Wilson
- Tuesday, June 20, 7:00 p.m., 44th & 32nd Ward Appeal Session & LVCC
Illinois Masonic Hospital, 836 W. Wellington

Report from Springfield 7% Property Tax Cap Passes Senate (But Not House)

On March 2, the Illinois Senate called and passed the 7% tax cap bill. Two interesting votes were cast: Republican Sen. Steve Rauschenberger (Elgin) stood up and voted YES. He is aware of the problem with the huge increases that we have been getting here in the city. Ironically, Sen. Carol Ronen (D.-Chicago), who represents city neighborhoods like Edgewater, Uptown, Andersonville and Rogers Park, spoke out against the bill. Her vote was recorded as "present" which means she did not support the renewal of the 7%.

There were some changes in the bill in the Senate version. The "cap on the cap" was raised from \$20,000 to \$60,000 and was extended with another "sunset" provision for three years. TRAC believes that this increase would benefit more people during the reassessment this year. This will give us some time to work for real property tax reform - acquisition-based assessing! We'd like to thank Mayor Daley, Assessor Houlihan and Sen. Terry Link (chief sponsor) for their hard work during this phase in the Senate. And, to all of the Senators that voted YES, thank you.

So What Happened in the House? Madigan's Buzz Saw!

We knew it was going to be an uphill battle in the House. Big business, namely the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, BOMA, Tax Appeal Attorneys, Metropolitan Planning Council (A+ Illinois) and others threw their weight, influence and money around to take away our property tax relief. These special interests groups were joined by Speaker Michael Madigan and 12 Chicago Democratic state representatives who worked against us. Speaker Madigan pulled votes off the bill and knowing that it didn't stand a chance - he was able to cast a "YES" vote for the record.

Madigan took an unusually aggressive step in writing to all 50 Chicago aldermen suggesting a study by the University of Illinois and one done by the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce/Building Office and Managers Association (BOMA), could be used by the aldermen to handle their angry constituents when the reassessment notices start arriving. This group of business interests was quoted recently as saying that this 7% cap bill was "manipulating the system for a select subset of affluent homeowners." The Center on Public Integrity reported in a 1998 article that "...he (Madigan) has abstained from voting and he generally abstains from any deliberations that deal with changes in real estate law." We wonder why Speaker Madigan has changed his course and is taking such an interest and holding up this legislation. Is it because his law firm of Madigan & Getzendanner does more real estate tax work for corporations than any other law firm in the Loop? Shouldn't someone from the Illinois Attorney General's office be investigating this conflict of interest?

Civic Federation, in its studies of this bill, which are far more comprehensive, supported the renewal of the 7% for another three years because it will maintain stability in our communities. Without this protection they conclude homeowners will see double-digit increases that could adversely shock the housing market in Cook County.

With regard to the shift of the tax burden, commercial interests may have seen an increase of 2.4%, but without our 7% homeowner protection businesses would have seen a 2% decrease in their assessments. Again, continuing the shift of the tax burden away from commercial interests to the homeowner.

We counted on our Representatives to get out there and really work for us. TRAC would like to acknowledge the "three horsemen" again - Rep. Lou Lang, Rep. John Fritchey and Rep. Harry Osterman. They led the charge on the floor and spoke eloquently about their neighbors who needed the 7% and why. They worked with other caucuses to try to get more votes - going against Madigan's unspoken intentions. These were the "go-to" guys when the bill was first passed in 2004. Reps. Rich Bradley, D'Amico, and Lyons joined with these three in asking for help from downstate Representatives when a new effort will begin in the veto session this fall. We can't thank you enough for your efforts.

So What Now?

Right now there is no bill in Springfield. It was defeated in the House. We need to go back to Springfield with a bill and overwhelming support for a vote in the veto session...after the November elections and just before the Chicago mayoral election in February 2007. With your support, TRAC will keep this issue alive and in the news all summer long!

IN CONCLUSION: As Ben Jorvasky wrote in his article, "Mum's the Word", May 12, 2006, "Most legislative insiders think that Daley and Madigan are playing a wait-and-see game on the issue. If the citizenry rises up angry as reassessment notices come out, (they) will probably back some sort of cap..." So how angry do we have to get? Maybe another Tea Party and thousands of tea bags shipped off to our elected officials with a message about the up-coming elections? Stayed tuned for calls to actions! Get ready to rumble!

TRAC is an all volunteer group that needs your support and involvement. We have a lot to do this year and next and need your financial support.

Postage and printing are what your dues go towards. Since this is the triennial reassessment year we will need to print more material than ever. Please send us a contribution and/or membership today and help us get to the goal line -- property tax reform.

Become a TRAC Member Today!

Clip and return this form in an envelope to TRAC, 857 W Buckingham, Chicago, IL 60657. Please make check payable to: TRAC

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Home phone _____

Office phone _____

E-mail _____

Fax _____

Suggested annual membership fee:

* Business Member \$15

* Regular & Family \$10

* Seniors \$5

__ Please call me. I'd like to volunteer too!

__ Please accept my contribution \$ _____

TRAC has applied for corporation status organized under the General Not-for-Profit Corporation Act of Illinois. A member is defined as any Illinois resident, business or organization.

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