

Winter  
2007

# TRACTION



Tax Reform  
Action Coalition  
867 West Buckingham  
Chicago, IL 60657  
312-458-9202  
www.trac-il.org

## Neighborhood & Community Groups Supporting TRAC

Archer Heights Civic  
Association  
Bickerdick Redevelopment  
Corporation  
Bowmanville Community  
Organization  
Bucktown Community  
Organization  
Brighton Park  
Neighborhood Council  
Chinese American Service  
League  
East Lakeview Neighbors  
Edgewater Community  
Council  
Erie Neighborhood House  
Greater Rockwell  
Organization  
Hamlin Park Neighborhood  
Association  
Hawthorne Neighbors  
Horner Park West  
Neighborhood Association  
Jefferson Park  
Neighborhood Association  
Lake View Citizens' Council  
Lakewood Balmoral  
Residents Council  
Lincoln Central  
M.A.G.I.C. Woodlawn  
North Logan Square  
Block Club  
Northcenter/Lincoln Square  
Neighborhood Association  
Northcenter Chamber of  
Commerce  
Old Irving Park Association  
Pilsen Alliance  
Portage Park Neighborhood  
Association  
South Lake View  
Neighborhood Association  
Southport Neighbors  
Triangle Neighbors  
U.N.I.T.E. Civic  
Ukranian Village  
Preservation Society  
West DePaul Neighborhood  
Association  
West Walker Association  
Wicker Park Committee  
Wrightwood Neighbors

## 2006 in Review: What A Year!

TRAC's 2006 has been a year full of "calls to action" beginning with our kick-off "**Blizzard of Postcards**" campaign in January 2006 through, in December 2006, **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. Cook County Assessor James 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.

In September TRAC held a **huge community rally at the Humboldt Park Boat House** themed *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. Among new groups that have joined the fight are those representing Archer Heights, Back of the Yards, the Chinese 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. The message? **FIND THE VOTES AND PASS THE 7%!**



**TRAC's September protest rally at the Humboldt Park Boat House drew community groups from all corners of the city.**

The reassessment 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 **House Speaker Mike Madigan**, Mayor Daley and **Governor Rod Blagojevich** 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 the Governor'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?*

## News Flash

On January 29, Senate President Emil Jones announced the Senate's intention of "fast tracking" the 7% bill in the opening days of the Legislature, passing it with a majority and sending it over to the House. The content of the bill is important. It raises the "cap on the cap" from \$20,000 to \$60,000 and benefits service men and women returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. This is the bill that the Senate passed last spring. This is also the bill that House Speaker Mike Madigan buried

in the Rules Committee. Let's see if Madigan can be persuaded by our Representatives (call them!), the Governor and, hopefully, the Mayor to pass this bill in time for it to be reflected on our 2nd installment property tax bills. Both Houses gave us this relief back in 2004. Now it would appear that they are trying to take it away! Keep making those phone calls!

ALSO: Madigan issued his own press release with a letter to Assessor Houlihan asking for the NAMES, ADDRESSES, VALUE AND PIN numbers for all Cook County taxpayers/homeowners who received

the maximum benefit from the 7%. He says he wants to determine whether the 7% should be passed again.

Some questions: Why does he need yours and your neighbors names? What is he going to do with these names? Who is going to see this "database"? Why did he wait so long to ask for this information? The kicker is, he doesn't want to pay for this Freedom of Information request. He's an elected official asking for a freebie from our strapped county government. Our Calls to Action will update you as this bill moves through the Legislature, which starts soon.

## What's Next in 2007?

**It is back to the beginning again.** A new bill will have to be written and passed again in both the House and Senate. There are currently efforts now for some kind of a compromise. We will keep you up-to-date with every little detail. There will be more phone calls to make, more rallies and maybe a demonstration and/or bus trip down to Springfield!

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!"**

### What YOU Can Do NOW...

- 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), Senate President Emil Jones (773-995-7748) and, of course, House Speaker Michael Madigan (773-581-8000).

- Since our Aldermen and Mayor are all running for office, call them and ask them what they plan on doing to get this passed BEFORE the election which is the end of February.

- And, get out and vote!

## Are You Getting "TRAC's Calls to Action"?



- If you're not get them already, sign up to receive TRAC's "Calls to Action."
- E-mail TRAC.president@gmail.com and ask to be added to the list!
- And if you're not already, please become a member of TRAC today! (We would also greatly appreciate any donations.)

## Also in 2007: 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 on to 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, which means higher property taxes PLUS a 67% income tax hike, we cannot support the "swap."

Visit our website for more information on this issue.

[www.trac-il.org](http://www.trac-il.org)

### TRAC's New Year Resolution

WE RESOLVE to continue working on getting the 7% property tax cap renewed with the maximum relief and to start pressing for "acquisition based assessing." We hope your resolution is the same!

Continue to press your elected officials for passage of the 7% Tax Cap! TRAC will keep you informed and updated on our Website and in e-mails.

**Make Phone Calls!  
Let them hear you  
loud and clear...**

Mayor Daley  
312-744-3300

House Speaker  
Mike Madigan  
773-581-8000

Gov. Rod Blagojevich  
312-814-2121

Senate President  
Emil Jones  
773-995-7748

**Pass the 7%!**

### 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—in an uncanny sense of timing—held his own press conference the same time to talk about anything but the renewal of the 7%.

### Confusion: 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. There is a HUGE DIFFERENCE between these two bills. They chose 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...**in the end nothing passed in either the House or the Senate.



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## 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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