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We need real tax relief

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House Speaker Michael Madigan's call for a Senate vote on S.B. 13 [letters, June 14] omits to outline the complexities of his House amendments, presumably crafted by the Tax Federation. The revised legislation fails to put into place original language of the bill providing that seniors do not need to reapply annually for the senior citizen exemption.

The speaker's overall premise, however, is that homeowner tax relief needs to be phased out and has constructed a plan that installs a longtime homeowner's exemption based on a 10-year residency as well as income levels. But this would not take effect until the second year. As a transition, residents who have seen over a 100 percent increase in their equalized assessed valuation would get an additional \$10,000 exemption in their first year only.

So, if someone qualifies for the first-year benefit but not the long-term exemption (it is estimated that only 40 percent of Chicago would meet the 10-year residency, and of those, only 25 percent would meet the income level), they would receive a \$40,000 exemption in the first year and have a huge sticker shock in the second year when the exemption drops to \$24,000, and \$18,000 beyond that.

The complexities are further exacerbated when you realize the longtime homeowner exemption expires after two years.

Homeowners trying to keep ahead of the property tax tsunami do not have the resources to hire tax wizards but we know that the speaker's version of property tax relief is playing to interests beyond homeowner relief. We urge simplification of the 7 percent property tax relief to its original intent.

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