

IDEAS TO HELP SENIORS IN INDIANA

By Woodrow Wilcox

I help senior citizens with their financial problems all the time. There is only so much that I can do to help them. But, I have some ideas on how all of us can help senior citizens – and ourselves. Here are a few of my ideas.

1. By state law or federal law, limit the amount of property taxes that can be imposed and collected to no more than one percent of the market value of the property. In such a case, a \$100,000 piece of property could not be taxed any more than \$1,000.

There are several reasons for this proposal. First, I believe that large piles of money in a public treasury attract dishonest politicians like garbage attracts flies. If you reduce the amount of money in any public treasury, dishonest politicians will be less attracted to it and the public office that controls the funds. If you don't limit what public officials have to spend, how will they know when to stop spending? By limiting the amount of money available, you force the politicians to make tough choices which prove their priorities. Other communities limit how much their politicians can spend. Why can't that be done here? In Las Vegas, by law, the property tax can never be more than one percent of a property's value. Oh, but Las Vegas collects lots of taxes through gambling. So do Indiana and the communities of northwest Indiana. Besides, recently, the State of Indiana has taken on more of the costs of public schools. So, why are property taxes in northwest Indiana rising rather than declining? In some communities in northern Lake County, property taxes on homes have risen 900%, and some property tax bills are about 20% of the home's market value. This excessive taxation hits senior citizens especially hard. My proposal of a one percent cap on property taxes would prohibit the current practice of grabbing property owners by their ankles, holding them upside down, shaking them to make all their money fall to the ground, and repeating the process several times per year until the local politicians are satisfied with the results.

2. Regulate what pharmaceutical companies and medical service providers can charge. In other words, don't let pharmaceutical companies and medical service providers charge whatever they want to charge.

There are several reasons for this proposal. In normal commercial dealings, market forces work well to keep prices reasonable. But, in a situation where a person is forced to sign documents agreeing to pay "whatever the bill is" when the signer or a loved one is in pain or suffering, normal market forces evaporate. The emotions of wanting a loved one to get help override the rational thinking of normal free market forces. To prevent the average senior citizen, or anyone else, from being exploited in such a situation, government must regulate the charges. An example of outrageous medical charges is the recent case of a mother of twin six year old boys with a strep throat who went to a local hospital's emergency room on a weekend. She didn't have insurance because her husband lost his job and the health insurance. She told the hospital personnel that she had no insurance. She did not qualify for Medicaid because she and her husband were buying a home before he was laid off. She got a shot of penicillin and was sent home. Then, she got a bill for over \$600. If we allow medical service providers and pharmaceutical companies to charge whatever they want, all of us will end up selling our cars, our homes, our blood plasma, our extra kidneys, and then our children just to pay for the medical services and prescription drugs that we need to live. Then, finally, slavery can be re-established in America just as some greedy people want it to be.