

August 31, 2004

Letter to the Editor / Op-Ed Editor

Dear Editor:

Indiana needs a One State – One Standard Property Tax System

Thousands of north Lake County property owners got “hit” with enormous property tax bills. For example, Alma Podgorski, a senior citizen on Social Security Disability in Hammond, saw her property tax bill go from under \$200 to almost \$6,000 per year. For people with mortgages, the high property taxes were added to their mortgage payments so that some people’s monthly mortgage payments rose by hundreds or thousands of dollars.

Under the current property tax laws, Indiana has three different systems. All of Indiana’s elected assessors outside Lake County reassessed the properties in their areas. But, no elected assessor in Lake County was allowed to reassess property. Instead, the Department of Local Government Finance in Indianapolis reassessed the property of the big industrial property owners in north Lake County with an appraisal-assessment tax formula that gave the big industries really big tax savings. The rest of Lake County was assessed by Cole, Layer & Trumble from Ohio using a different appraisal-assessment tax formula that resulted in higher taxes for many Lake County property owners.

This three system tax plan is unfair. It is as unfair as creating different tax formulas for people of different races, different colors, or different religions. It must be changed and changed quickly.

The quickest way for it to change is for Governor Joe Kernan to call a special session of the Indiana legislature so that the law can be changed and the problems fixed. If state legislators are called to a special session NOW, they will work quickly to fix the problems, or they will be stuck in the state capitol while their opponents campaign against them. So, now is the very best time for Governor Kernan to call a special session.

Please, join me in urging Governor Kernan to call a special session of the Indiana legislature to rewrite Indiana’s property tax system so that fairness is restored. Here is the contact information:

Governor Kernan’s office: phone: 317-232-4567; email: www.in.gov/gov
Mail: State Capitol, Room 206, 200 W. Washington St., Indianaapolis, IN 46204

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