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Sen. Gibbons Informs Taxpayers of Property Tax Protections

Encourages Taxing Jurisdictions to be “Friends of Taxpayers”

ST. LOUIS — Senate President Pro Tem Michael R. Gibbons, R-Kirkwood, today informed taxpayers of the property tax roll back process and encouraged local taxing jurisdictions to be “Friends of Taxpayers” by rolling back their property tax rates. Gibbons, who is researching property tax reforms on the state level, alerted property owners that August is the month most taxing jurisdictions set their tax rate for the coming year. He said it is the duty of local taxing jurisdictions to prevent property tax reassessment growth from totaling more than 5 percent or the current consumer price index, which is 2.6 percent.

“Reassessment is about keeping values accurate, it is not supposed to be about raising taxes,” Gibbons said. “I want to help protect taxpayers and their homes by arming them with the knowledge that all our local taxing jurisdictions can and should roll back their tax rates.”

Law prohibits counties from allowing growth in property tax reassessments of more than 5 percent or the current CPI, which is 2.6 percent. However, many local taxing jurisdictions have not proposed to roll back the actual tax rate, rather only the tax rate ceiling which reflects the highest levy voters approved. To meet the spirit of the Hancock Amendment, Gibbons said constituents should encourage taxing jurisdictions to roll back their tax rate, even if it falls below the tax ceiling.

“Rolling back the tax ceiling year after year does nothing if a taxing jurisdiction’s rate is below the ceiling,” Gibbons said. “Taxpayers can gain relief by getting involved and asking their taxing jurisdictions to be a friend of taxpayers by rolling back their rate, even if it’s below the tax ceiling.”

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Gibbons noted the savings can add up if all of a property owner's taxing jurisdictions roll back. For example, in 2005, University City's School District chose to roll back their tax rate to counter balance increases in reassessment and saved taxpayers in that district \$109.03 for every \$100,000 of appraised value. Gibbons commended the district for being a friend of taxpayers by rolling back, even when they were not at their tax rate ceiling.

Gibbons said most local taxing jurisdictions such as school districts and public libraries are expected to vote on their respective property tax rates by the end of August, making now the time to inform taxpayers about these jurisdictions' option to roll back their tax rates. Gibbons encouraged taxpayers to use four simple steps to get involved in the process:

- 1. Contact your taxing jurisdiction: call or attend a public meeting.**
- 2. Find out if they are at their tax rate ceiling, if so they must roll back.**
- 3. If they are not at the tax rate ceiling, ask them if they plan to roll back.**
- 4. If they say no, ask them why not.**

Gibbons said he plans to watch local taxing jurisdictions and recognize those that do roll back with the "Friend of Taxpayer" Award.

A list of the current tax rates and tax rate ceilings of all taxing jurisdictions in St. Louis County is available online along with a Frequently Asked Questions and Answers summary concerning property tax roll backs. Both can be found by visiting www.senate.mo.gov, clicking on the link for the [Pro Tem's Page](#), and clicking on [Residential Property Tax Information](#).

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