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that is morally wrong.*

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## **Senate Leader Announces Legislation to Protect Taxpayers from Back Door Tax Increases**

***Sen. Gibbons Sponsors Bill to Mandate Rollbacks, Close Loopholes  
with Truth in Taxation, Predict Increases and Expand Relief***

ST. LOUIS CO. – Taxpayers may soon be protected in future reassessment years from back door tax increases under the veil of reassessment thanks to legislation sponsored by Senate President Pro Tem Michael R. Gibbons, R-Kirkwood. The property tax reform package, Senate Bill 711, will also close tax increase loopholes with truth in taxation, require advance notifications for more predictable assessments and tax bill increases, and expand tax relief for low-income seniors and the disabled.

"We must stop these back door tax increases," Gibbons said. "Taxpayers are fed up with them and we must protect taxpayers from tax increases caused by failing to rollback the tax rate."

The measure mandates that all taxing jurisdictions, regardless of whether they are operating at or below their tax rate ceiling, must roll back their tax rate to counter reassessment increases. Currently, only taxing jurisdictions operating at their tax rate ceiling are required by Missouri's Constitution to roll back to protect taxpayers, leaving taxing jurisdictions operating below their ceiling to approve back door tax increases with no legal recourse. This year in St. Louis County alone, taxing jurisdictions raised residents' property taxes by more than \$46.6 million by not rolling back to protect taxpayers.

"Reassessment is about keeping values accurate, it is not supposed to be about raising taxes," Gibbons said. "With this bill we will protect taxpayers from back door tax increases and require truth in taxation to close other tax increase loopholes."

The bill closes a loophole that allows taxing districts to apply new voter approved levies to future and unknown assessments. Gibbons said the "truth in taxation" provision will protect taxpayers by preventing unpredictable tax increases on top of any property tax increases taxpayers approve at the polls.

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"It's wrong that taxpayers only learn of their tax bill about one month before it's due," he said. "Taxpayers have a right to know what their tax bill will be as early as possible so they can better plan for reassessment challenges and budget for any increases."

Gibbons said the bill requires that taxpayers receive an estimated tax bill along with their reassessment notices by February 15.

Gibbons also said Missouri's property tax relief programs have not kept pace with inflation. The Senior Citizen Property Tax credit was established in 1973. At the time, the top income for qualifying for the credit was \$7,500 and the top award was \$300. Over the past 35 years, the income threshold has increased to \$27,500 while the top award lagged behind at only \$750. Gibbons said SB711 will increase that assistance to \$1,100.

"We also must better protect our low income seniors and the disabled by expanding tax relief programs so they won't be taxed out of their homes," he said.

A summary as well as full text of the bill can be found by visiting [www.senate.mo.gov](http://www.senate.mo.gov) and doing a keyword search for SB711.

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