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Senator Eric Schmitt Commends Voters’ Choice for an Independent, Elected Assessor

St. Louis County Voters Say Yes to Elected Assessor

ST. LOUIS CO. – State Senator Eric Schmitt, R-Glendale, legislative sponsor of the elected assessor Constitutional question that will appear on the November ballot, said he is thrilled that St. Louis County voters today resoundingly said “yes” to a similar County Charter Amendment. Schmitt commended voters for choosing to replace the current appointed county assessor position with an elected, independent assessor who will be accountable to the taxpayers, not politicians.

Schmitt, who brought the idea of electing the assessor to the forefront, said currently, the assessor is selected by the County Executive meaning the appointed assessor is accountable solely to the County Executive and not to taxpayers.

“The assessor’s job should be to fairly assess property, not to meet budget projections or protect politicians,” Schmitt said. “This is a good government reform and an important victory for taxpayers.”

Schmitt said an elected assessor will bring transparency and accountability to an all important office like that of the St. Louis County Assessor. In the past, the office has plagued taxpayers with tax increases under the veil of reassessment; high property assessments, especially those that failed to reflect the housing market’s current downturn; an unresponsive appeals process for homeowners; and inaccurate and inflated drive by assessments.

“If the assessments are not fair and do not reflect current market values, then taxpayers are left paying higher taxes,” he said.

In 2009, Schmitt sponsored and passed Senate Joint Resolution 5 that set up the November 2010 ballot question, which at the time set up the first opportunity for St. Louis County to have an elected assessor. Proposition 2, that was adopted today, is a similar amendment to the county’s charter.

Assessors are elected in more than 100 other counties in the state, including St. Charles County. A study by the University of Missouri-St. Louis Public Policy Research Center and State Tax Commission noted that St. Charles County has the highest assessment accuracy in the state.

“Having an elected assessor attacks the problem on the front end, ensuring the process is more open, transparent and, most importantly, accountable to the taxpayers,” Schmitt said.

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