



22 January 2008

Dear Friends,

The House majority leadership has graciously granted us another week to strengthen our position and apply more pressure on contrary lawmakers. More on this in a moment.

The only bill related to property taxes that was voted last week was HB 1947. This bill is a constitutional amendment that was backed by Rep. David Levdansky (D-Allegheny/Washington) and is companion legislation to Rep. Levdansky's valueless [HB 1600](#). It will ALLOW up to a 100% homestead property tax exemption instead of the current 50%. The key word here is ALLOW, since the bill by itself does absolutely NOTHING - it needs further enabling legislation sometime in the future to have any effect. While the majority party [spin](#) on this bill is that it is historic, it is actually nothing more than a hollow election year ploy to garner votes - the politicians are attempting to deceive us yet again. The measure passed unanimously, 193-0, because it would have been difficult for any legislator to vote against it and risk looking like an obstructionist. The bill effectively says that "we may eventually consider the possibility that sometime in the future we might..."

While the vote was meaningless, the debate that it generated was really the important issue. Opposition lawmakers clearly made the point that the bill is worthless and pretty much had Rep. Levdansky on the defensive during the entire debate. Rep. Levdansky was asked three times for a straight yes or no answer on whether he would support total elimination of school property taxes if this constitutional change was made and all three times he avoided the question and refused to commit. Rep. Levdansky obviously does not want elimination and this was made clearly evident during the debate.

Although majority leader Rep. Bill DeWeese said that debate was postponed on [HB 1600](#) and HB 1489 (the two bogus "relief" bills that we oppose) because there were so many amendments that the members needed time to study them, [Tony Phyrillas](#) of the Pottstown *Mercury* and other House insiders have reported that the real reason debate was postponed was because their supporters did not have sufficient votes to pass either bill. It appears that many of the members know that these bills will be regarded by the public as Act 1 revisited and do not want to be associated with another scam. It is a certainty that the majority leaders will be beating the bushes for votes for these bills this week.

Meanwhile, our efforts have gained strength because of your overwhelming response to the last Action Item, our PCTA members' work on publicizing HB 1275, the *School Property Tax Elimination Act*, and because of targeted advertisements that ran in more than 20 Pennsylvania newspapers on Tuesday and Wednesday (1/15-16). A sample of those advertisements is here:

http://mysite.verizon.net/drbsr/PTCCWeb/1275_Punxsutawney_Spirit_Smith.pdf.

On January 9, the Pennsylvania Bar Association circulated a legislative alert statewide encouraging their membership to contact their legislators with the request that they oppose the *School Property Tax Elimination Act*. As an indicator of the

success that your support has been making, the PBA issued on Friday (1/18) another [bulletin](#) that stated: "This delay has afforded taxpayer groups in support of Rohrer's legislation the opportunity to strengthen their voice and their legislative support for the proposal. Many House members who are committed to voting "no" on the Rohrer amendment are feeling this political pressure". The PBA didn't pull this information out thin air - they are likely receiving feedback from legislators who are running scared and telling them that their constituent's votes are more important than their support of the PBA's stance.

We've also heard that the newspaper ads and the huge number of e-mails and telephone calls were discussed in Harrisburg political circles last week. Apparently some of the House members were quite irritated; a staffer for one member reportedly said that this is "sleazy politics" (!?) and another reportedly said that it's "just not right" that the PCTA is doing this (!!??). Their arrogance is amazing! We are their employers and we have every right to demand that they address our grievances.

THE BOTTOM LINE IS THIS: We have been given another week to make our voices heard before property tax debate begins on January 28. We MUST use this time effectively to increase the pressure on these unresponsive lawmakers. The Action Items from last week's update can still be very effective and I ask all of you to PLEASE respond to them again and again and yet again to keep the pressure on - more than one contact with your legislator will emphasize your conviction! Because of your efforts we have gained tremendous momentum - DON'T LET UP NOW!

**** ACTION ITEMS ****

**** First, please immediately forward this e-mail to everyone you know and ask them to participate in this Action Item. We need as many voices as possible NOW.**

**** Second, call or e-mail your representative NOW to DEMAND that they support HB 1275, the *School Property Tax Elimination Act*, and that they REJECT HB 1600 and HB 1489. Tell them that your vote for them in 2008 will depend on their support of HB 1275, the *School Property Tax Elimination Act*, whether it is presented as a free-standing bill or as an amendment to another bill. Tell them that you are not interested in hearing any excuses that they may offer.** Contact information for your representative is available here: <http://www.legis.state.pa.us/cfdocs/legis/home/find.cfm>.

We are engaged in a classic battle between the special interests and the citizens of Pennsylvania. The special interests may have the money to influence lawmakers by donating to their re-election campaigns, but WE HAVE THE POWER OF THE BALLOT BOX and can remove these politicians from office in 2008 if they refuse to do the right thing for the taxpayers of Pennsylvania. The message must be made perfectly clear: ELIMINATE SCHOOL PROPERTY TAXES NOW OR WE WILL ELIMINATE YOUR JOB IN 2008!

Please, everyone, keep piling on and try to get as many of your contacts as possible to do the same. Lean on your district's representative and House majority leaders Bill DeWeese and Keith McCall and minority leader Sam Smith. Demand that they support House Bill 1275, the *School Property Tax Elimination Act*, and reject HB 1600 and HB 1489. Write letters to the editor, call radio talk shows. We have a good chance of success if we just don't get tired and give them the opportunity to ignore us again!

Let's all work together to get this done!

Please feel free to write to me with any comments, suggestions, or concerns.

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