

Please consider the following:

Demand an End to "Slow Death" Taxes

We paid our Nyack school tax bill for our home and we are angry. The increase is 8.3 percent; at that rate the house tax will double in nine years. Since I am 83 and my wife 80, I call it the "slow death" tax.

No, we are not spending too much on educating our grand kids. No, we are not paying teachers too much to teach our grand kids. Yes, we are paying too much in school taxes.

The property tax, used to raise school revenue, is egregiously unfair because it is not based on the ability to pay.

There is a fairer way to raise revenue:

- 1. In 2006, the statewide total revenue raised after deducting the Star savings from property taxes on single-, two- and three-family homes (homestead) was \$13 billion.**
- 2. In 2006, the aggregate federal adjusted gross income of New York State taxpayers was \$777 billion.**
- 3. If we put a 2 percent surtax on the \$777 billion we raise \$ 15.5 billion.**
- 4. If we eliminate the property tax's \$13 billion and replace it with the 2 percent surtax we get \$2.5 billion in additional revenue.**

To check out how this affects you, go to line 37 of your federal tax return. Line 37 is your Federal (AGI), multiply it by .02 percent and compare that number with your current school tax. I bet it will show a 40 percent to 75 percent savings. If your AGI is \$100,000 your school tax is \$2,000. (Please tell me, to help my study, your savings - e-mail me at iffy79@verizon.net.)

My plan is not based on made-up numbers but on government data. Less than 3 percent of New Yorkers receive 40 percent of New York's aggregate income but they pay nowhere near 40 percent of the school taxes. Ninety-seven percent of us share the balance of aggregate income and pay an unfair portion of school taxes. After 30 years of tax cuts for the top 3 percent, especially the top 1 percent, it is about time the rest of us got a tax cut.

I acknowledge the efforts of state legislators, to find a solution to the school-tax problem. All say Orange deserves more state aid and that is exactly what the state legislators of the remaining 51 counties say. I remind folks of a mathematical fact: If

you give more money to one county you have to give less to another county unless you increase taxes of another, some, or all counties.

All the legislators tout the STAR property tax rebate program but STAR is nothing more than a massive placebo. All lawmakers don't have the guts to say, "surtax on income tax." Apparently they believe you, the taxpayers, are not smart enough to get it. Unless we banish this archaic 18th century construct of a house tax, and go to a system based on the ability to pay, our schools and our kids will suffer the consequences of annual increases in school taxes surpassing the ability of folks' incomes to pay them.

Obviously any plan no matter how well researched and articulated will always need additional analysis and raise legitimate questions:

1-How is money distributed? But this is exactly the problem we now have.

2-Since renters also pay income taxes; it is unfair to impose 2 percent surtax on their income while they continue to pay a school tax in their rent. So a way must be found to erase that problem. It can be done but too lengthy to explain in this space.

So, folks, I tell you straight out: If you want tax justice and good schools, don't depend on politicians no matter how pleasant and cordial they are. The only way to get real change is to demand on getting rid of the slow death tax, and keep refusing to take no for an answer.

Irving feiner

p.s. the above appeared in an op-ed in the Rockland Journal-news---I will wait until you bring a hearing to my area when I will show up---despite my very advanced age-----irv feiner