



PTCC Update

August 18, 2016

Friends,

**** Please forward this message to everyone in your Pennsylvania address book. ****

There are links and graphics in this update that cannot be included in an email because they may trigger overzealous spam filters. Please see the Web version at <http://www.ptcc.us/arc081816.htm> for the complete update.

IMPORTANT ACTION ITEM

First and most importantly, Brian Fake, a very active and dedicated leader on the PTCC Facebook page, has posted an on-line petition to demand that Harrisburg lawmakers enact HB/SB 76, the Property Tax Independence Act. In the short time the petition has been active it has garnered thousands of signatures with more being added daily.

Everyone's voice needs to be heard if we are to achieve true home ownership through the Property Tax Independence Act. PLEASE take a few moments to sign the petition supporting our efforts to have this vital legislation enacted. Please share the link with everyone in your Pennsylvania address book and ask them to sign as well. Tell the Harrisburg politicians that you want property tax freedom NOW! <http://www.the-disaffected.com/the-need.html>

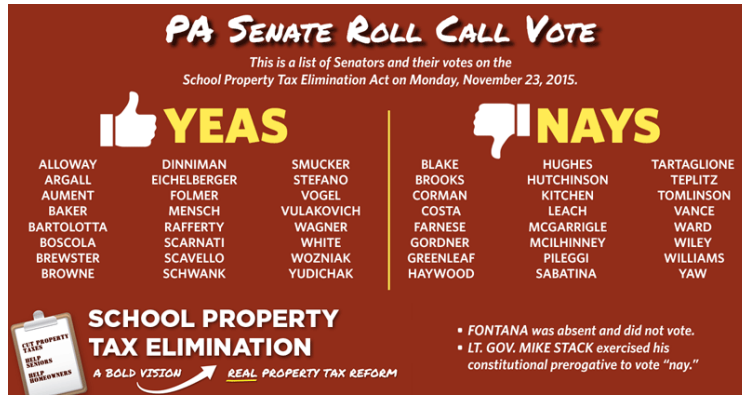
While you are on the petition site please click on "The Blog" tab at the top of the page. It contains heartbreaking true stories from families who have faced difficult struggles because of relentlessly rising school property taxes. If you will, please share your story to help the lawmakers understand the real pain caused by their reluctance to deal with this vital issue.

We CAN win with your help.

COWARDLY BETRAYAL

I'm sure that most of you are aware of the vote in the Senate on November 23 when the SB 76 language was attached as a gut-and-replace amendment to HB 683. When Senator David Argall

and the other prime sponsors arranged this we were certain that we had the votes for passage with a few to spare. Unfortunately, this changed very quickly with a last-minute betrayal by four Senators that caused the defeat of the measure in a 24-24 tie.



PA SENATE ROLL CALL VOTE
 This is a list of Senators and their votes on the
 School Property Tax Elimination Act on Monday, November 23, 2015.

YEAS			NAYS		
ALLOWAY	DINNIMAN	SMUCKER	BLAKE	HUGHES	TARTAGLIONE
ARGALL	EICHELBERGER	STEFANO	BROOKS	HUTCHINSON	TEPLITZ
AUMENT	FOLMER	VOGEL	CORMAN	KITCHEN	TOMLINSON
BAKER	MENSCH	VULAKOVICH	COSTA	LEACH	VANCE
BARTOLOTTA	RAFFERTY	WAGNER	FARNESE	MCGARRIGLE	WARD
BOSCOLA	SCARNATI	WHITE	GORDNER	MCILHINNEY	WILEY
BREWSTER	SCAVELLO	WOZNIAK	GREENLEAF	PILEGGI	WILLIAMS
BROWNE	SCHWANK	YUDICHAK	HAYWOOD	SABATINA	YAW

SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX ELIMINATION
 A BOLD VISION REAL PROPERTY TAX REFORM

- FONTANA was absent and did not vote.
- LT. GOV. MIKE STACK exercised his constitutional prerogative to vote "nay."

The final tally was actually 25-24 as Lieutenant Governor Mike Stack exercised his constitutional prerogative to vote "nay" as a tiebreaker. His vote was unnecessary since the tie was an automatic defeat but as a final exclamation point he voted against the measure anyway with a great show of arrogant laughter that was absolutely infuriating. This

unprincipled, callous man apparently took great pleasure in driving the final nail in the coffin of legislation that could help so many suffering Pennsylvanians. His display of defiant hubris was despicable. A complete list of the votes is available in the Web version of this update.

But what was really enraging about this debacle was that within hours of the vote four previously committed Senators reneged on their promises and voted against the legislation.

- Senator John Blake (D-22, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe) bailed at the last moment. This was not a surprise since the Senator has flipped his vote on SB 76 in the past. There is nothing more I can say about this as the man bows to his special interest benefactors and simply cannot be trusted to do as he says.

- Senator Wayne Fontana (D-42, Allegheny) was a co-sponsor and supporter of SB 76. He attended a fundraising event the night of the debate and did not cast a vote. It seemed a bit strange and very sad to us that he would somehow be absent for a momentous vote that could make such a positive change in the lives of millions of families. I suppose that rubbing elbows with affluent, powerful people must take precedence over the welfare of ordinary hard-working Pennsylvania taxpayers.

But two Senators in particular were a massive disappointment as they demonstrated their complete lack of integrity and stabbed their constituents and Pennsylvania taxpayers in the back after we counted on them to make SB 76 a reality.

Senator Kim Ward (R-39, Westmoreland) and Senator Thomas McGarrigle (R-26, Chester, Delaware) were both co-sponsors of SB 76 and both campaigned heavily on the bill to win their elections. On the day of the vote they both withdrew their co-sponsorship with a flurry of disjointed, nonsensical and totally false excuses for their actions, then voted against the bill. It took them several more days to finally state what they considered to be a valid reason for their objection but by then it was made obvious by their inept rationalizations that they had no real

justification to abandon their commitment. While we cannot prove it, there seems to be no doubt that they sold out to last minute special interest pressure and betrayed their constituents and all Pennsylvanians.

To add to the audacity of this charade, two months after the SB 76 defeat Senators Ward and Fontana issued a co-sponsorship memo for an “Enabling Local Option for Property Tax Elimination.” The memo read in part, “We are introducing a Constitutional amendment to allow the General Assembly to adopt legislation that would grant any local government in Pennsylvania with local voter approval, the option to eliminate property taxes and choose from alternative taxing options to make up for the loss revenues.” This is a smoke-and-mirrors piece of trash that is beyond ridiculous, accomplishes nothing, and absolutely proves that Senators Ward and Fontana are totally clueless about the property tax crisis. Property taxes simply cannot be eliminated by shifting taxes on the local level and this proposal does absolutely nothing to solve the fundamental problems with the property tax system. And to top off this absurdity the memo was inappropriately replete with lies and distortions about SB 76 in an apparent attempt to justify their betrayal. This worthless proposal is nothing more than a smokescreen that attempts to atone for their treachery and they think that we are stupid enough to believe their lies and support their valueless legislation. A link to the memo is available in the Web version of this update.

LOBBYIST INFLUENCE

Since we believe that special interest interference contributed to the SB 76 defeat, it is worthwhile to give you some insight into how these greedy, power-hungry lobbyists distort and twist the legislative process for their own self-serving benefit regardless of how their actions harm taxpayers. A link to this true story is available in the Web version of this update. Please take a few minutes to read it - it will enrage you and make you even more committed to winning this fight. <http://www.ptcc.us/lobbyist080316.htm>

WHERE WE STAND

At our request HB 76 has not been formally introduced in the House and the legislation’s prime sponsor, Representative Jim Cox, and House Majority Leader Dave Reed have honored that request. We feel there are insufficient votes for passage there and introducing the bill before we are prepared is an invitation for opponents to rush the bill to the House floor in an attempt to defeat it.

We are working toward another vote on SB 76 in the Senate but we are taking our time and will not allow it until we are certain that we have enough votes for passage and that there will be no more turncoats like the two special interest-owned Senators who flipped their vote at the

last moment, betrayed the people, and killed the bill in November. It is possible that we could pick up two more Senate votes in the near future but we may have to wait until after the election in November when we'll have new supporters.

We are far from finished. Several weeks ago Senator Richard Alloway (R-33, Adams, Cumberland, Franklin, York) jumped into a PTCC Facebook discussion about legislative supporters with this comment: "SB 76 has support from both good Dems and Rs. We're so close to accomplishing this. Please keep up the pressure!"

Please keep contacting your lawmakers on a frequent basis. They need to know that HB/SB 76 is vital for you and others and that you expect their support. Don't be afraid to call them every day if you'd like and have your family, friends, and neighbors contact them, too! We will not quit until we win this fight. It is so urgent for so many people that we cannot afford to slow down, even for a moment.

REAL ACTIVISM



Dean Klopp of the PCTA group *Pennsylvania Liberty Alliance* along with his intrepid band of property tax warriors from across Pennsylvania have been pounding the streets of Central Pennsylvania's Senate District 15 (Dauphin and Perry Counties) in a concerted drive to spread the word of the Property Tax Independence Act

and to tell voters about the opposition to school property tax elimination by their uncaring Senator, Rob Teplitz.

They will again hit the streets of suburban Harrisburg in Lower Paxton Township/Colonial Park on Saturday August 27th to go door-to-door and to petition at the area's numerous shopping centers. In addition, they are manning a booth at the Perry County Fair in Newport from August 23 to 27 and need volunteers each night. They will then move to other Harrisburg suburbs as well as Dauphin and Halifax on September 10th and 24th. A town hall meeting is being organized in the Paxtonia area for September.

They can use your help to spread the word and they will supply all the materials you will need. It's a fun day of camaraderie with fellow supporters of property tax independence, so please join them if you are able! You can reach out to Dean at (717) 821-5069 or email adklopp@comcast.net to RSVP or get more details.

WE'RE STILL GROWING!

The Pennsylvania Coalition of Taxpayer Associations (PCTA) is now 87 nonpartisan taxpayer groups that support the enactment of House Bill 76 and Senate Bill 76.

We welcome our newest allies in the fight for property tax independence: Indiana County for Property Tax Freedom, Indiana County PA Against Unfair Reassessment, and Indiana Armstrong Patriots. Thanks to all of them for joining the fight!

And for even more growth, the PTCC Facebook page is now almost 10,000 members strong! The page always has the latest news and an active discussion about the property tax fight, so if you are a Facebook subscriber please join us. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/pataxpayers/>

ENCOURAGING WORDS

Finally, if you are impatient and discouraged because the Property Tax Independence Act hasn't been enacted in a few weeks or a few months, remember that this law is a major paradigm shift for Pennsylvania. The current property tax system has great momentum. It has been entrenched for more than 150 years and effecting a massive change like HB/SB 76 is not easily accomplished, especially when it is opposed by powerful special interests that benefit handsomely from the current system.

We have been fighting this battle for more than a decade. We have made tremendous progress since we began in 2004 and I believe we are on the very edge of success. We need to continue to push ourselves as hard as possible to win. We can do it!

Consider this: One hundred years ago a similar major paradigm shift was seen in the women's suffrage movement. It took almost 50 years for women to gain the right to vote but the untiring advocates were persistent, steadfast and unshakable. They never wavered and with perseverance they won the battle. There is NO reason why we cannot do the same and with our massive support base and with the progress we have already made it will certainly not take as long.

WE ARE ALMOST THERE. KEEP FIGHTING AND NEVER GIVE UP!

Thank you, everyone, for your continued support of the Property Tax Independence Act. Your efforts are helping to ensure a brighter future for all Pennsylvanians and are making our state a better place to live.

David Baldinger
PTCC Administrator

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