

SUSPENSION

A RESOLUTION TO BE SUBMITTED BY LEGISLATORS LORIGO, MILLS, RATH AND DIXON

Re: Urging Governor Cuomo and the New York State Legislature to Reverse the Recent Changes to the NYS Enhanced STAR Program

WHEREAS, Enhanced STAR is a supplemental property tax relief for senior citizens aged 65 and older with qualifying incomes. The program lowers the property owners responsibility for their district's school tax each year; and

WHEREAS, 2.6 million New York State residents receive the Enhanced STAR benefit with thousands of senior citizens in Erie County alone. These people often rely on the annual savings from the STAR program to help lower their cost of living here in New York; and

WHEREAS, as of 2019 NYS has changed the way STAR rebates are awarded, making it more difficult for seniors to apply for, and qualify for, the state tax rebate with added steps and new dates for application; and

WHEREAS, recent changes include requiring additional steps to provide income verification for new recipients of the Enhanced STAR program; forcing senior citizens who already qualify for the Partial Tax Exemption for Real Property of Senior Citizens also apply for the Enhanced STAR program, something that in past years was done automatically; and those who receive the Partial Tax Exemption will need to reapply for that program every year they receive Enhanced STAR benefits; and

WHEREAS, New York is one of the highest taxed states in the US. Ever-increasing expenses, like taxes, far too often drive residents out of homes where they raised families; and

WHEREAS, it is a finding of this body that the changes in the Enhanced STAR program have made an already confusing program more complex for new applicants. As elected officials we should strive to make New York a more affordable place to live for everyone, not drive away residents who have spent a lifetime in our state.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT

RESOLVED, that this honorable body hereby urges New York's elected officials to reverse the recent changes to the Enhanced STAR program and to simplify the program for the benefit of senior citizens in New York; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that certified copies of this Resolution be sent to Governor Andrew M. Cuomo, the Western New York delegation to the New York State Legislature, and any other party deemed necessary and proper.

Fiscal Impact: None for resolution.