



FULTON COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION

Non-Profit Advocate Of Lower Property Taxes In Atlanta/Fulton

February 2006

Two Pending State Resolutions of Great Importance To The Taxpayers!

For over ten years, the FCTA has been advocating the capping of property reassessments. For an equal time, the FCTA has urged the teaching of market-demand skills in Georgia high schools to those students not planning to continue to college. This year, a group of legislators – with leadership and courage – have introduced Resolutions for capping reassessments and teaching market-demand skills in the State's high schools. The names of these legislators are listed in the footnotes of this newsletter.

House Resolution 162* – Cap reassessments and stop out-of-control increases in property taxes

Out-of-control increases in property reassessments are driving property taxes to an unaffordable level for a growing number of Georgia homeowners. In 2005, when inflation was 3.4%, 68.9% of all homeowners in Fulton County had increased reassessments up to 20%, while 30.5% of all homeowners had increases of over 20%, including 7.9% of homeowners with increases of over 50%. Since 1992, increased reassessments have been the largest driver of increased property taxes. The present out-of-control increases are forcing many elderly homeowners on fixed incomes and many

moderate-income homeowners to become delinquent in the payment of their property taxes, causing more home liens and more forced sales. Many young first time home buyers are having serious problems meeting their unexpected tax increases.

What have other states done to solve this problem?

According to the Association of State Legislatures, during the last ten years, thirty-one other states have either frozen or capped increases in property reassessments.

If passed, what will Resolution 162 accomplish?

In the current session of the General Assembly, House Resolution 162 proposes to cap the annual homestead property reassessments at 3% annually or the consumer price index, whichever is lower. Because capping requires a Constitutional Amendment, House Resolution 162 will require 2/3 of the State Senate (38 of the 56 Senators) and 2/3 of the State House (120 of the 180 Representatives). The measure, if passed by the General Assembly, must be approved by the voters on November 7th. If passed, House Resolution 162 will provide property tax stability and peace-of-mind to every homeowner in the State of Georgia.

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Executive Director: Jacqueline M. Echols, PhD

How will capping impact cities, counties & school districts in Georgia?

With each annual reassessment since 1992, cities, counties and school districts have shared an annual revenue bonanza which has been characterized by The Atlanta Journal-Constitution as "a back-door tax." With the capping of reassessments, cities, counties and school districts will still be able to increase revenue through the 3% or cost-of-living provision. Moreover, if any city, county or school district, for whatever reason, needs additional tax revenue, increasing the tax millage will still be an alternative. Under proposed Resolution 162, any increase in revenue beyond the 3% or cost-of-living provision will have to come from increasing the tax millage. This will require public discussion and a vote by elected officials, with voters having the opportunity to hold accountable elected officials voting for increased millage.

***Sponsors:** Representatives Edward Lindsey (Co-Chairman, House Judiciary Committee), Jerry Keen (House Majority Leader), Sharon Cooper (Majority Caucus Chair), Joe Wilkinson (Chairman, Ethics Committee, Mike Coan (Secretary, Intra-governmental Coordination Committee) and Martin Scott (Secretary, House Ways & Means Committee)

House Resolution 1048* – Overcoming high youth unemployment by teaching market-demand skills in Georgia's high schools

Youth unemployment (ages 16-19) in the State of Georgia is among the highest in the country, i.e., minority youth unemployment is 41.9%, white youth unemployment, 21.7%. Youth unemployment in the City of Atlanta at 56%, is among the highest of any city in the United States. High youth unemployment negatively affects the State's economy and undermines the morale of a large part of our youth. In addition, there is a direct correlation between high youth unemployment and high youth crime; there is a similar correlation between high youth unemployment and high school drop-out.

What have other states done to solve this problem?

To help solve this problem and encourage youngsters to complete high school, a growing number of states have passed legislation to motivate, oversee and provide matching funds to local school districts for teaching market-demand skills in high school to those students who do not plan to continue to college. The National Council On Education & The Economy cites Louisville, Kentucky as the pioneer in such skills-learning. Personal visits to Louisville by leading educators from Georgia revealed that the program has succeeded far beyond all expectations. According to Dr. Stephen Daeschner, Superintendent, Louisville-Jefferson County Public Schools, "With well over 12,000 youngsters enrolled in the program, there is no doubt that skills-learning encourages these youngsters to complete high school with the skills needed in today's economy." Dr. Bernard Minnis, former Director, Technology Education, Louisville states, "The transition rate from high school to significant jobs is a whopping 97.4%, with the average job paying \$20 per hour."

What are market-demand skills?

In 1988, Louisville-Jefferson County Public Schools entered into a partnership with the Greater Louisville Chamber of Commerce whereby the Chamber surveyed its membership to determine the specific market-demand skills to meet workforce needs. Here are but a few of 27 skills most in demand in Louisville: Automobile Technology (motor and body repairs), Computer Programming, Construction Trades (carpentry, masonry, roofing, heating and air conditioning), Health Care Technologies (Cat-Scan, MRI).

What is the role of the business community?

In Louisville in 1988, it was the business community which funded a professional management study "How To Improve The Market-Demand Skills Of High School Graduates?" Together, the Chamber and Public Schools developed a two-year program for each specific market-demand skill, modifying the curriculum to accommodate half-day school, half-day skills learning. Although the Kentucky business community continues to partner with each local school district, it was the business community of Kentucky that persuaded the State Legislature to pass House Bill 698 in March 1992 to motivate, oversee and provide matching funds to finance skills-learning in the high schools.

What will Resolution 1048 accomplish?

Resolution 1048 is a beginning! If passed, this Resolution provides for the Speaker of the House to appoint five members of the House to constitute a Study Committee on Market-Demand Skills Education In High Schools. The Committee "shall undertake a study of the conditions, needs, issues and problems of Youth Unemployment in Georgia, reporting its findings and recommendations with suggestions for proposed legislation on or before December 31, 2006."

***Sponsors: Representatives Fran Millar (Vice Chairman, House Education Committee, Coleman Brooks (Chairman, House Education Committee, Jan Jones (Vice Chair, Appropriations (Education) Committee), Roger Williams (Chairman, Intra-governmental Coordination Committee) and Bob Holmes (Chairman, Fulton Delegation House of Representatives).**

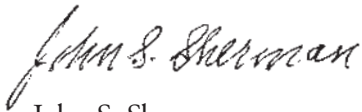
Call To Action

These two Resolutions are in the best interests of the taxpayers and should have the fullest support of every homeowner in the State!

FCTA members – their neighbors and friends – are urged to email the following members of the House Ways & Means Committee, imploring them to approve the two Resolutions mentioned above. The members of the House Ways & Means Committee and their email addresses are listed below.

Thank you for your help!

Kind regards,



John S. Sherman
President

House Ways & Means Committee Members

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\$50 Family___ \$100 Patron___ \$200 Corporate Member___ \$500 Corporate Sponsor___

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I enclose a contribution of \$35___ \$50___ \$100___ Other___

If you prefer, you can charge your membership or a donation on-line at www.fcta.us

Name _____

Address _____

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