



Queens Civic Congress

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QUEENS CIVICS' CALL FOR REAL PROPERTY TAX REFORM

In testimony presented today (Friday, March 2, 2007) to the New York City Council Committee on Finance, chaired by Councilman David I. Weprin, the Queens Civic Congress [QCC] called real reform of the New York City Real Property Tax and Assessment System. The statement, presented at City Hall by QCC Executive Vice President Corey B. Bearak (North Bellerose Civic Association), follows:

Thank you for affording the Queens Civic Congress the opportunity to comment on the City Real Property Tax and Assessment System. The Queens Civic Congress, an umbrella group of 100 civic organizations, welcomes today's oversight hearing on "Property Tax Assessments" and expresses the hope that after this hearing concludes, we can soon look forward to "Day One" of the implementation of a fair and equitable system that no longer discriminates against the low, moderate and middle income homeowners and tenants when it comes to assessing real property and levying the real estate tax.

Spare me a moment to quote from the Queens Civic Congress Platform:

Implement Co-op and Condo Property Tax reform without shifting any burden to owners of one, two or three family homes. Capture upwards of one billion dollars in lost real estate tax revenue based on illegal uses and improper property classifications through a combination of fines and improvements in the classification of real property.

For some five years, the Queens Civic Congress with a membership that represents almost every community in the borough, has advocated this reform. Our annual comments on the Mayor's Preliminary Budget and the Proposed Executive Budget press this need. In my testimony last month at Queens Borough Hall, we noted our real property tax reform recommendation would yield "at least \$2 billion." My attached six columns ([1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), and [6](#)) and [report](#) for the Drum Major Institute for Public Policy indicate how conservative that number is today. In the attachments, I discuss in greater detail the problem and solutions.

Bottom line, our tax reform proposal will help more New Yorkers who need the help – Middle, moderate and lower income homeowners and tenants with tax bills that approximate the payments made before the infamous 25 percent (that was the actual percent increase on homeowners' bills when the rate increased 18% a few years back taking into account the actual 22% hike on homeowners on top of the increase property tax assessment). These homeowners need \$100 a month, not \$400 per year. The Queens Civic Congress proposal does that.

Something remains really wrong when a system perpetuates inequities such as a co-ops along the perimeter of Central Park paying less – based on effective tax rates -- than a typical homeowners. Something remains wrong when I scour the real estate pages of my daily newspapers and find million dollar homes that pay less taxes than my simple home. Something remains wrong when City Hall rejects the “absentee owner” reform at the heart of our core proposal and then uses the same information as the standard necessary to qualify for its meager rebate.

The conceptual solutions is simple. The means necessary requires changes in state and city laws. Why not commit to the solutions outlined in the attached documents? Why not commit to the reforms needed to make it happen? We identify where to impose equity based on a property's use and occupancy; we identify substantial revenue; we identify how to employ this revenue to address inequities. We need to keep housing affordable in this site. Property tax reform goes a long way to ensuring modest housing that predominates in Classes 1 and 2 remain or return to affordability.

The Queens Civic Congress stands ready to work with our elected officials to realize this significant reform. Thank you.

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Association of Old Forest Hills ♦ Auburndale Improvement Association ♦ Bayside Civic Database ♦ Bayside Clear-Spring Council ♦ Bayside Hills Civic Association ♦ Bayswater Civic Association ♦ Bay Terrace Community Alliance ♦ Bellaire-BellVill Civic Association ♦ Belle Harbor Property Owners Association ♦ Bellerose Commonwealth Civic Association ♦ Bellerose Hillside Civic Association ♦ Bell Park Manor Terrace Community Council ♦ Bowne Park Civic Association ♦ Briarwood Community Association ♦ Cambria Heights Civic Association ♦ Cherry Robinson Homeowners ♦ C.O.M.E.T. (Communities of Maspeth-Elmhurst Together) ♦ Concerned Citizens of Laurelton ♦ Creedmoor Civic Association ♦ Doug-Bay Manor Civic Association ♦ Douglas Manor Association ♦ Douglaston Civic Association ♦ Dutch Kills Civic Assn. of Long Island City ♦ East Flushing Civic Association ♦ Federated Block Associations of Laurelton ♦ Federation of Civic Associations of Southeast Queens ♦ Floral Park Community Council ♦ Flushing Heights Civic Association ♦ Flushing on the Hill Taxpayers Association ♦ Forest Hills Chamber of Commerce ♦ Forest Hills Crescents Association ♦ Forest Hills-Van Court Association ♦ Fresh Meadows Homeowners Association ♦ Georgetown Mews ♦ Glendale Civic Association of Queens ♦ Glen Oaks Village Owners ♦ Greater Astoria Historical Society ♦ Greater Whitestone Taxpayers Civic Association ♦ Harding Heights Civic Association ♦ Hillcrest Estates Civic Association ♦ Hilltop Village Co-Op #1 ♦ Hilltop Village Co-Op #2 ♦ Hilltop Village Co-Op #3 ♦ Hilltop Village Co-Op #4 ♦ Hollis Hills Civic Association ♦ Holliswood Civic Association ♦ Hollis Park Gardens Civic Association ♦ Holly Civic Association ♦ Hunters Point Community Coalition ♦ Hyde Park Gardens Cooperative ♦ Jackson Heights Beautification Group ♦ Jamaica Estates Association ♦ Jamaica Hill Community Association ♦ Juniper Park Civic Association ♦ Kew Forest Neighborhood Association ♦ Kew Gardens Civic Association ♦ Kew Gardens Hills Homeowners Association ♦ Kissena Park Civic Association ♦ Little Neck Bay Civic Association ♦ Little Neck Pines ♦ Malba Civic Association ♦ Meadowlark Gardens Owners ♦ Middle Village Maspeth Civic Association ♦ Middle Village Property Owners Association ♦ Mitchell Linden Civic Association ♦ Neponsit Property Owners Association ♦ Newtown Civic Association ♦ North Bellerose Civic Association ♦ North Flushing Civic Association ♦ North Hills Estates Civic Association ♦ Northwest Clearview Homeowners Association ♦ Norwood Civic Association ♦ Oakland Terrace/ Gardens Community Council ♦ Off Broadway Homeowners Association ♦ Our Neighborhood Improvement Association ♦ Parkway Village Historical Society ♦ Queensboro Hill Neighborhood Association ♦ Queens Colony Civic Association ♦ Queens Community Civic Corp. ♦ Queens Village Civic Association ♦ Ramblersville-Hawtree Civic Association ♦ Richmond Hill Historical Society ♦ Ridgewood Property Owners Association ♦ Rockaway Action Committee ♦ Rockaway Park Homeowners/Residents ♦ Rocky Hill Civic Association ♦ Rosedale Civic Association ♦ Royal Ranch Association. ♦ Southeast Queens Concerned Neighbors ♦ South Ozone Park West Civic Association ♦ Springfield/Rosedale Community Action Association ♦ Station Road Civic Assoc. of Auburndale ♦ Sunnyside Gardens/Harrison Place Homeowners ♦ Surrey Estates Civic Association ♦ The Cornucopia Society ♦ Union Turnpike Merchants Association ♦ United Forties Civic Association ♦ United Neighbors Civic Association ♦ Utopia Estates Civic Association ♦ Waldheim Neighborhood Association ♦ Wayanda Civic Association ♦ West Cunningham Park Civic Association ♦ Westmoreland Association ♦ Woodside Community Council