

Omnibus Consortium Omnibus Consortium

Press Release

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Omnibus Consortium on Senate Property Tax Proposal Supports Stronger Circuit Breaker – Says No to Caps

(Albany, N.Y.) – While the State Senate just passed a bill to provide property tax relief, the Omnibus Consortium -- a statewide coalition of property tax reform groups, fiscal watchdogs, education advocates and unions -- is urging members of both chambers to focus attention on the Consortium's middle income circuit breaker/property tax reform legislation to provide urgently needed property tax relief instead of the bill they passed today. The Consortium's circuit breaker was introduced in both houses last session as S4239 (Liz Krueger), and A8702 (Steve Englebright). Both bills had strong bi-partisan sponsorship.

While Consortium members applaud the Senate's recognition that a circuit breaker is the fairest, most meaningful, and most cost-effective way to provide property tax relief, and while this specific proposal has many positive features, it regrettably sets the refundable credit too low (30%) which renders it impractical and largely unresponsive to an accelerating crisis which is literally forcing people from their homes. We also thank the Senate Majority for resisting calls to reinstate all STAR Rebate checks which we believe were a poor excuse for property tax relief to begin with.

"We thank Senator Klein and the Senate Majority for having the political will to tackle this long standing problem," stated **Ron Deutsch of New Yorkers for Fiscal Fairness**. "We appreciate their efforts but feel that the circuit breaker they are proposing does not provide residents with enough relief to address the problem that too many New Yorkers are simply paying far too much of their income in property taxes."

John Whiteley of the New York State Property Tax Reform Coalition commented: "The circuit breaker proposed in this bill includes many of the important features we have advocated, and

we commend the Senate for that. However, the proposed 30% tax credit is glaringly inadequate given the crisis faced by our most overburdened homeowners and undermines the circuit breaker goal of targeted relief. A simple amendment that would replace the 30% credit with the 70% tax credit proposed by our Consortium would produce a circuit breaker that we could support."

"Property tax relief and reform is the number one issue facing my constituents in Ulster County. The Omnibus Property Tax Reform and Relief Bill provides comprehensive meaningful relief and reform by dealing with the underlying problems with the current State and Local tax relationship," said **Susan Zimet, Ulster County Legislator.**

Gioia Shebar of Taxnightmare.org said that, "By adopting many of the features of the Omnibus Consortiums circuit breaker, which is supported by tax reformers across the state, the Senate has shown it is attempting to address the ruinous property tax. Sadly, unlike the Omnibus Solution, the Senate bill delivers to little relief and no real reform of the property tax system whatsoever."

"The only type of *cap* that limits the amount an individual homeowner has to pay is a circuit breaker - and while the Senate Majority has championed this cause, the amount of relief in this bill will cause it to be ineffective in solving the crisis. To ask New Yorkers to continue to pay 70% of the amount that is excessive means that many will still shell out 20 or 25 percent of their income and lose their homes," stated **Robert McKeon from TREND.**

A one size fits all cap applied to all school districts, whether their spending is well above average or well below average, simply makes no sense at a time when the Governor is proposing drastic cuts to school aid," said **Frank Mauro, Executive Director of the Fiscal Policy Institute.**

Omnibus Consortium Members

Susan Zimet, Ulster County Legislator- Chair Ulster County Blue Ribbon Commission on School Funding and Tax Reform (Ulster BRC) and Property Tax Agenda

Rich Gerentine, Ulster County Legislator, Ulster BRC

John Whiteley, Tri-County Committee for Property Tax Relief, NYS Property Tax Reform Coalition

Roberta Whiteley, Tri County Committee for Property Tax Relief, NYS Property Tax Reform Coalition

Robert McKeon-TREND (Tax Reform Effort of Northern Dutchess County), Tax Reform Coordinator

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Tara O'Connor-Alisse, Taxnightmare.org Coordinating Committee -Ulster BRC

Sam Davis, Putnam Reform Group

Gioia Shebar- Coordinator, Taxnightmare.org, Ulster BRC

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Frank Mauro, Fiscal Policy Institute
Ron Deutsch, New Yorkers for Fiscal Fairness
Melinda Person, NYSUT
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Ellie and Bill Trumpbour, N.Y.S. Farm Bureau
Victor Bach, Community Service Society