

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** All Members of the House of Representatives

**FROM:** Representative Jesse White

**DATE:** January 5, 2011

**SUBJECT:** Co-sponsorship of Legislation – Providing for a temporary moratorium for court-ordered countywide reassessments.

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In the near future, I will introduce legislation that will provide for a temporary moratorium of court-ordered countywide reassessments. The current method of property tax assessment in this Commonwealth is fragmented and provides little uniformity between counties resulting in vast inequities across the Commonwealth.

Pennsylvania's tax assessment system provides little protection for homeowners who experience sudden and dramatic increases in their property assessments as a result of a countywide assessment. Failure to address the problem has led to the potential for devastating tax increases that would be harmful to the citizens and economic well-being of this Commonwealth.

Many counties are now facing court-ordered reassessments which will cost taxpayers millions of dollars per county; my home county of Washington is currently under court order to begin an \$8 million reassessment by the end of 2011. As the reassessment debacle in Allegheny County clearly demonstrated, to spend this kind of money without any uniform standard for the reassessment process is nothing short of insanity. At a time when we need to be fiscal stewards of public funds, there is a clear need to step in and stop these reassessments until we can act.

In September 2010, the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee published a 220 page report entitled "Pennsylvania's System for Property Valuation and Reassessment", which examined this issue and compared our plight to that of neighboring states. I will be introducing a model statewide reassessment proposal in the coming weeks, but it is imperative that we stop these court-ordered reassessments until the General Assembly can act on this issue. This is a common sense proposal which will save tens of millions of taxpayer dollars statewide, and I invite you to join me in co-sponsoring this important legislation.

If you would like to be added, please contact Eileen Kornotto at [ekornott@pahouse.net](mailto:ekornott@pahouse.net) or 783-6437.