

TESTIMONY OF RONALD BOLTZ
LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE
MARCH 11, 2010

Good morning. My name is Ronald Boltz and I live in Pine Grove Township, Schuylkill County.

In April 2008, I purchased a home in the district and my taxes at the time were 2020 per year. I assumed that that was going to be the amount I would be paying as that was what the previous owner had paid. Several months after I bought the house, I received a notice in the mail from the County informing of a reverse appeal being done on my property. On the notice was a hearing date, which I attended and I found out that my taxes were going to be increased to approximately \$4800 per year, over double what I was paying.

Through this process, I learned that the school board is the entity responsible for doing the reverse appeal. However, the situation was very confusing and very vague. Since this happened, I started regularly attending school Board meetings to learn more about the process and question as to why I had such a huge tax increase.

I found out that they were doing reverse appeals on all bought and sold houses in the area and reversing appealing the assessment while other homes stayed the same. I submitted right to know paperwork to find out more data as to which other properties were affected and to what degree.

After receiving this paperwork, I did easy calculations to see what a tax increase across the entire taxing district would be needed to increase the revenue to replace the revenue generated by the reverse appeal process. I was shocked to find out that a homeowner with a property valued similar to mine would have only seen a \$23 per year increase versus my \$2,800 increase. Had I been given the opportunity to bring this to the school board member's attention prior to their decision to appeal my property, perhaps they would have made a different decision.

I have had conversations with school board members individually. Following these conversations, I was surprised to learn they did not understand many of the elements of the appeal process. I went to the Schuylkill County Courthouse on the day of my assessment appeal hearing and was surprised that none of the school board members were present. This denied me the opportunity to call them as witnesses at the hearing or ask clarifying questions about the appeal. I thought it was strange that they were not there and assumed they would be there since they were the ones to initiate the appeal. I think this made the hearing less valuable than it could have been and really took away from the outcome.