



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Owen H. Johnson

## Johnson/Senate Pass \$6 Billion, Two-year Property Tax Relief Plan

OWEN H. JOHNSON January 24, 2007

State Senator Owen H. Johnson (4th Senate District, Babylon), Chairman of the Finance Committee, joined his Senate colleagues this week in passing a three-part property tax relief plan (S.1) that would significantly expand the Senate-initiated property tax relief rebate program. The plan calls for \$2.6 billion in property tax relief this year, and \$3.4 billion in 2008.

"We started to put real property tax relief into the hands of hardworking taxpayers last year, but we need to expand on that effort," said Senator Owen H. Johnson. "In my district on Long Island, many homeowners are being hit with higher tax bills year after year. Taxpayers need help and this legislation will ensure that they get the help they need and deserve."

Johnson explained that since the plan would triple the size of direct property tax rebate checks in the first year, Suffolk County homeowners could expect to see rebate checks three times as much as they received last year. In 2006, the average basic STAR rebate check in Suffolk County was \$231. The Senate's plan would raise the average rebate amount to \$694 in 2007. In 2008, it would rise to \$925. Similarly, the average enhanced STAR rebate for seniors in Suffolk County was \$375 in 2006. The average rebate would rise to \$1125 in 2007 and \$1499 in 2008 under the Senate's plan. The Rebate Plus program can be paid for with the State budget surplus. The Senate Finance Committee estimates that New York State will end this fiscal year with a sizable surplus.

In addition to the rebate expansion, the Senate plan also calls for giving voters greater input on local property tax rates by allowing them to collect signatures to limit the growth in local school and municipal tax rates. The plan also establishes a Blue Ribbon Commission to recommend reforms to help reduce property taxes.

"We need to do everything we possibly can to help keep local property taxes under control and provide real, meaningful relief to taxpayers whose income is being stretched too thin," said Senator Johnson. "That's why I will be vigorously advocating enactment of this plan this session."

The bill was sent to the Assembly.