



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

Kennedy and Ryan Urge Homeowners to Re-Register for Basic Star Exemption to Save Hundreds on Taxes

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY December 16, 2013

| ISSUE: **STAR (SCHOOL TAX RELIEF PROGRAM)**



Homeowners Required to Re-Register for Basic STAR Exemption by December 31 – Lawmakers Urge WNY Homeowners to Register for Important School Tax Exemption with Deadline Just Two Weeks Away.

Officials from NYS Department of Taxation and Finance have Expressed Concerns about Buffalo's Lower Rates of Re-Registration.

Kennedy and Ryan to WNY Homeowners: No Reason to Wait. Process to Re-Register is Quick and Easy.

BUFFALO – Today, December 16, 2013, New York State Senator Tim Kennedy and New York State Assemblyman Sean Ryan urged Western New York homeowners to complete their STAR registration by the December 31 deadline. Kennedy and Ryan held a press event Monday to remind Western New Yorkers of the rapidly approaching deadline and to encourage any homeowners who have not yet re-registered to avoid the stress and renew their Basic STAR exemption as soon as possible. The lawmakers called the process quick and easy, and said there's no reason to wait.

Visit www.tax.ny.gov, or call 518-457-2036, now to re-register for your Basic STAR exemption.

Kennedy and Ryan released the latest STAR registration figures, which show that many Western New York homeowners still have not re-registered. Across Erie County, only 82 percent of homeowners have re-registered, which means 30,587 properties still have not renewed their Basic STAR exemption.

Buffalo currently has the lowest participation rate in Erie County with 68 percent of homeowners already re-registered to receive their Basic STAR exemption. Officials from the state Department of Taxation and Finance said they are very concerned about Buffalo's low participation rate. The region's largest city is followed by Lackawanna at 77 percent, the Town of Sardinia at 79 percent and the Town of Collins at 80 percent.

Senator Tim Kennedy said, "Re-registering for your Basic STAR exemption will save you hundreds on your school taxes, and the entire renewal process should only take a few minutes. We're encouraging Western New Yorkers to take a couple of minutes to renew their Basic STAR right away. There is no reason to wait. Why not log onto tax.ny.gov or call 518-457-2036 to reapply today? You'll avoid the stress of worrying about it, and you'll help keep hundreds of dollars in your pockets – money that so many families rely on to help make ends meet. This is your money, so take advantage of this tax relief today. With one simple call or a

few clicks online, you can lower your school taxes substantially.”

Assemblyman Sean Ryan said, “The deadline to register for STAR is only two weeks away, and it is very important that homeowners make the call or go online to take advantage of this very important program. We know that there are thousands of homeowners in Buffalo and Western New York who haven’t signed up yet, and they should do so right away. The STAR program saves millions of New Yorkers hundreds of dollars each year, and homeowners should be able to continue to enjoy this much needed tax relief.”

The New York State School Tax Relief Program (STAR) provides local homeowners with substantial savings on their school taxes. The 2013-2014 New York State Budget included a STAR Registration Program, which requires homeowners receiving a Basic STAR Exemption to register with the New York State Department of Taxation and Finance in order to receive the exemption in 2014 and subsequent years.

Basic STAR recipients are required to complete the one-time registration for their exemption by December 31, 2013. Registration can also be done by visiting www.tax.ny.gov, or calling 518-457-2036.

New York State launched the STAR Registration Program as an effort to root out fraud and waste in the STAR program, while ensuring continued tax savings for eligible participants in the program. In fiscal year 2011-12, fraudulent or false filings and abuse of the system cost the state \$13 million, according to State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli. The STAR Registration program impacts more than 2.6 million homeowners receiving the Basic STAR exemption statewide.

These changes to Basic STAR have no effect on Enhanced STAR for senior citizens. Residents whose age is 65 or older and who earn less than \$81,900 should contact their local assessor for

Enhanced STAR deadlines in their specific municipality.

Basic STAR is available for owner-occupied, primary residences where the owner of the residence and their spouse earn an income of less than \$500,000. Basic STAR exempts the first \$30,000 of the full value of a home from school taxes. The average homeowner saves \$700 as a result of the Basic STAR exemption.

In addition to Buffalo and Lackawanna, Senator Kennedy also represents Cheektowaga, where 85 percent of homeowners have already re-registered. Assemblyman Ryan's district also covers Hamburg, which has a participation rate of 86 percent of homeowners.

The latest figures available from the state Department of Taxation and Finance are below:

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