



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patty Ritchie

Turning 65? Cut Your Property Taxes with Enhanced Star

PATTY RITCHIE February 14, 2011

| ISSUE: **SENIORS**

Since I took office last month, I have been working to find ways to help reduce our state's tax burden on families.

That's been the number one issue raised by families I talk to who tell me how difficult it is for them to pay their bills, their mortgage and property taxes.

If you or any member of your family is turning 65 this year, make sure you don't miss out on your chance to possibly reduce your school taxes by taking advantage of New York State's School Tax Relief Program known as STAR.

You have until March 1st in most communities to apply for this program that can help you lower your property tax payment.

You are probably already aware of the Basic STAR which is available to anyone who earns less than \$500,000 a year. There is no age limit for Basic STAR, which exempts the first \$30,000 of the full value of a home from school taxes. Once you are approved for Basic STAR, you'll receive the tax break each year unless you move.

If you or your spouse turn 65 at any time in 2011, you may be eligible for the Enhanced STAR exemption. If you have any family member turning 65 this year, make sure they are aware that they may be eligible to reduce their tax payment. To qualify, you must be 65 or older. You must own property that you use as your primary residence, and the total annual income of all the owners of the property must be \$79,050 or less, based on 2009 Income Tax Returns. If you qualify, the program exempts the first \$60,100 of the full value of your home from school taxes.

If you have questions, please contact your local assessor.

Most residents of the 48th Senate District must file their application by March 1st. Your town assessor's office can provide you with an application and answer any questions you might have. Residents of the city of Ogdensburg must apply by April 1st. Residents of the city of Watertown have until January 1st.

I hope this information helps. In the weeks ahead, I will be working with my colleagues to continue the STAR program and to help bring needed tax relief to people like you.