



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pete Harckham

## How My STAR 'Bill of Rights' Will Help New Yorkers and Speed Up Rebates

PETE HARCKHAM June 5, 2019

| ISSUE: [STAR](#), [SENATOR HARCKHAM](#), [TAXPAYERS](#)



Bill Designed to Improve Taxpayer Communications is Passed by the Senate and Moves on to the Assembly

(Albany, NY) I'm proud to announce that my New York State School Tax Relief program (STAR) Bill of Rights (S.4024B) has been passed by the NYS Senate. The bill is designed to help STAR recipients navigate a system that is often unresponsive to taxpayers and sometimes keeps them waiting for years for rebates. To fix the problem, the bill creates the office of a

dedicated STAR Ombudsman, that taxpayers can contact for assistance, and by improving the turnaround time of rebates.

It is unacceptable that too many New York taxpayers have to wait so long for money they are owed from the STAR program. If the IRS can issue most tax refunds within 21 days of filing, the state should also have a quick turnaround time for STAR rebates. The passage of this bill will give new rights to STAR recipients and makes it clear that an overhaul of the STAR process is a top priority for the Senate Majority. Further, the creation of the STAR Ombudsman will give taxpayers one source of contact to resolve issues rather than the maze they must navigate now.

My office has received numerous STAR complaints from constituents, some of whom have been waiting for rebate checks from as far back as 2016. Constituents also complained about running into an unresponsive bureaucracy when calling the state tax department to inquire about their rebate.

One of my constituents, Cross River resident, Michael Falsetti, whose rebate issues date back three years said “the problem is that you cannot get through to the department that’s handling the refund. There is zero accountability. They kept telling me to ‘call back in a few weeks.’”

The STAR program was introduced in 1997. STAR credits can average about \$750 for basic STAR and about \$1,400 for Enhanced STAR for seniors. The state shifted the STAR program from being an upfront savings on property owners’ school tax bills to a check sent by the state tax department to people who bought homes after August 1, 2015, or who didn’t first apply for STAR since May 1, 2014.

The bill now heads to the NYS Assembly, where it is sponsored by Assemblymember Carrie Woerner. (AD113). I look forward to its passage!

## 2019-S4024B

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- Introduced
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Enacts the "STAR credit bill of rights" and establishes the office of STAR ombudsman

February 25, 2019

In Senate Committee [Budget and Revenue](#)

Sponsored by [Pete Harckham](#)

Do you support this bill?

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