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The Journal News reports Thursday that Deputy County Executive Larry Schwartz has been critical of the Westchester County Association for supporting a maximum 4 percent tax cap on school property taxes while blasting the county government over its proposed tax increase of about 3 percent. Since schools account for a much larger share of the total property tax bill, Mr. Schwartz says, the business group is being "inconsistent and hypocritical."

But Schwartz's comments themselves are unfair and misleading. The school tax cap proposed by Gov. David Paterson would have resulted in an annual school tax limit of 3.4 percent over the past decade, plus any revenues generated by new construction. The 4 percent figure cited by Schwartz is an absolute ceiling on the tax hike a school board could impose without voter approval. Schwartz also fails to note that the same proposal also allows voters to petition for an "override" of the cap, reducing the ceiling all the way down to zero, if they desire.

Westchester County taxpayers are making it clear that they believe a 3 percent county tax hike is too high in a severe recession. County officials like Mr. Schwartz ought to do less finger-pointing and more listening.

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