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### City Assessor: Homeowners Taxes DOUBLE in Decade.Commercial Taxes Decline 9%

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by [jfb Bailey](#)

**WPCNR THE CERTIORARIAN. June 17,2009:** White Plains Assessor Lloyd Tasch in an op-ed piece appearing in *The Journal News* today debunked the Westchester County Association and the Builder's Institute statements opposing the Commercial Assessment Ratio bill awaiting action in the New York State Senate, as "untrue."

The bill is being introduced by State Senator Suzi Oppenheimer and was sponsored in the Assembly by White Plains' Adam Bradley. Bradley and Oppenheimer have yet to defend their bill which has been attacked by the Westchester County Association and the Westchester County Executive on the grounds that it will raise taxes on commercial property owners and co-op and condominium owners and hurt Westchester in attracting businesses to the region.



**Tasch, President of the Westchester County Assessor's Association repeated his statements he made to WPCNR last week, that the County Association lobbying effort last labeling the CAR bill as "shifting the tax burden from homeowners to commercial property owners," writing today, "This is untrue." He also points out the glaring need for such a bill, reporting that the Westchester County Tax Commission reports that through the use of the certiorari process and the unfortunate effects of the equalization rate, county commercial property owners pay 9% less taxes than they did 11 years ago, while county homeowners today taxes have *doubled*.**

Tasch points out to the Westchester County Association that "what this bill does is mitigate further shifts of property taxes *from* commercial properties onto the backs of homeowners."

Tasch points the certiorari drain, exclusively chronicled the last five years by WPCNR, that "since the early 1990s,commercial properties have been the beneficiaries of huge tax windfalls as a result of the flawed methodology and the application of equalization rates in commercial tax certiorari proceedings.." charging "the balance (between commercial property taxes and homeowner property taxes) has been disrupted to the detriment of the homeowner."

Responding to Westchester County Association news releases alleging owners of condominiums and cooperatives would pay more expenses if this bill were passed, Tasch notes cooperatives and condominiums "typically pays 50 percent less than that of a similarly valued residential home." Tasch dismisses the County Association press releases claiming taxes of condo and condominium owners would go up if the bill passed this way: "The proposed CAR bill will not

increase their assessments, but it will help mitigate future certiorari losses (from condo/coop grievances) if and when litigated.”

Tasch reminds the Westchester County Association of just how tax friendly being a commercial property owner in Westchester has been the last decade, writing that the Westchester County Tax Commission annual reports show that “county commercial property owners paid 9 percent less than they paid 11 years ago, while residential taxes have doubled.”

Tasch writes hopefully, “The CAR bill will help prevent further erosion of the commercial tax base, and bring some sanity and fairness back to the tax certiorari process. Certiorari attorneys, The Westchester County Association, local chapters of the Builder’s Institute and commercial taxpayers are naturally opposed to this bill. What about homeowners, who represent 73% of this county... We believe that the Senate will not fall prey to the scare tactics of raising taxes by self-interested parties.”

Tasch notes that contrary to reports that the bill is being introduced as a surprise, that the bill was originally introduced in 2005.

Tasch closes with this comment, noting that in New York City commercial property owners pay five times the taxes residential property owners pay and in suburban Nassau County where commercial property owners pay twice the taxes *(because there is a separate commercial assessment ratio in effect in those areas)*

Tasch writes: No wonder residential taxes in Westchester are the highest in the nation.

Adam Bradley, the sponsor of the commercial assessment ratio bill and Senator Suzi Oppenheimer have thus far not contacted WPCNR in defense of the bill in the face of Westchester County Association attacks on the bill and County Executive Andrew Spano’s call for the State Senate not to pass the bill for fear it will hurt Westchester ability to attract business.