

My name is Al Simon. I am the Deputy Mayor of Windsor.

Thank you of the opportunity to speak with you today. I am here on behalf of the taxpayers of Windsor to seek your help. **I am requesting this committee support legislation to allow municipalities the option of deferring or delaying the implementation of mandated property revaluation.**

All elected officials are facing very difficult decisions this year and probably for the next few years, due to the extreme economic problems facing our nation and state. Windsor faces the same decisions as other towns—how to provide effective public services during a period of recession. The more options we have at our disposal the better.

We have completed our mandated property revaluation based on the October 2008 Grand List. We know the effect it will have. Specifically, 90% of Windsor homeowners will experience a tax increase due to a tax shift from the revaluation. The tax shift will lead to \$1.7 million in higher property taxes. The prime beneficiaries of the tax shift will be the many businesses located in Windsor. As you know, this tax shift does not buy any new or enhanced services; it just moves the property tax burden further onto our homeowners.

Windsor is a gateway community for people looking for a better quality of life, or better schools for their kids. The revaluation data tells us those hardest hit will be people who purchased starter homes or condominiums. These are the people who can afford a tax increase the least.

My prime function, along with the other members of our Town Council, is to create our annual town budget. Our budgets can only pass through referendum. The practical problem for us is clear. The revaluation will cause a median tax increase of 4-5%, before any budgetary increase. We of course, will do everything we can to restrain budgetary expenditures, but even a very modest 2% budgetary tax increase means 6 or 7% to the average homeowner. That just won't fly.

I don't know how revaluation affects residents of the other 45 towns that must implement their revaluation, but I do know that the choice to implement is a tremendous tool to allow local elected leaders to do what is best for their own towns. I am not aware of any negative impact to the State in allowing municipalities this choice, and in fact, previous legislation has allowed the sort of postponement we are seeking.

Lastly, let me make a final request regarding the timing of this legislation. I'm afraid we need immediate action. Windsor will complete work on its budget by the end of April, then will put it out to the voters. We will have to know the tax impact to our voters before the end of April. I admit to ignorance on how your legislative process works, but to allow municipalities to properly plan their budgets, we would need approval of a revaluation deferral very soon.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak with you.