



Fillmore McPherson
First Selectman

TOWN OF MADISON
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March 14, 2014

To the Honorable Members of the Planning and Development Committee:

Subject: Change CGS regarding Senior Tax Relief

Thank you for allowing me to speak to you regarding a desired change to CGS Section 12-129n. The Statute currently allows towns to award tax abatements toward a senior taxpayer's home property tax bill. The Statute also allows towns to consider the taxpayer's income in setting the levels of tax abatements. I would ask that the law be amended to allow the home's appraised value, as determined by the latest Grand List Appraisal, to be considered in setting these levels of abatements. Considering the value would not be mandatory upon the towns, but would be allowable if the town so chooses.

The Town of Madison is one of 90 municipalities that offer a senior tax abatement program. Madison's program currently has four levels of abatement based on the senior's income, with the lower income levels receiving the greater abatements. A review of the recipients of these abatements shows that there are a number of homes with very high appraised values, with some worth over \$1 million.

We in Madison, and I am sure in many other towns, feel an obligation to help our needy seniors stay in their homes. However someone in a million dollar house hardly fits the definition of "needy". If nothing else, there are certainly various ways to tap the equity of such a house, including the tax deferral program offered by the town.

If the CGS were amended as I have requested, then the abatement program could be redesigned to channel more of the available funds to those who are truly more needy: those with low incomes and who live in more modest homes with less home equity available.

Specifically, paragraph (a) of 12-129n contains the authorizing details of what a town is allowed to consider. Currently it states "...and meet the requirements which may be established by such municipality with respect to maximum income allowable..." I suggest the addition of five words so that it reads "...maximum income allowable *and/or assessed property value*..." Of course I defer to the experts if a different wording is more appropriate.

Again, thank you for allowing me to speak. I am more than happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Fillmore McPherson".

Fillmore McPherson
First Selectman
Town of Madison

FM/pra

CGS.ltr