



Property Tax News 2011

Andrea A. Raila & Associates
Property Tax & Public Policy Consultants
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Historic Increases in Property Tax Multiplier & Rates

Record increases in the state “multiplier” and huge variations in exemptions & tax rates adversely impacted Cook and collar county property owners in Illinois. Adding to this tax burden, assessments were increased or remained the same, with few exceptions of modest 5 to 10 percent decreases, during historic downward spirals in market values and soaring foreclosure rates.

With the weak economy, property owners naturally expect lower assessments and fewer taxes. At best, taxpayers who won reduced assessments on tax appeals were able to moderate tax increases, or just keep tax bills at the same level.

Special Service Area (SSA) High Tax Rates Harm Southside Businesses

Residents and business of West Roseland-Pullman communities on Chicago’s southside were outraged by property tax increases of **50 to 200** percent. Their protests to public officials resulted in a repeal of the new Special Service Area (SSA), responsible for imposing a higher tax rate.

SSAs are created when local businesses and residents approve **modest property tax increases** for optional services such as beautification, marketing, and extra street cleaning and security patrols. When approved, taxpayers get tax impact notices about revised tax rates for their SSA area.

In 2010, Chicago had 42 SSA districts with an **average tax rate** at **0.712%**, and almost **three-quarters** of the **SSAs were below a 1.0% rate**. The average budget for these SSAs was **\$470,000**.

West Roseland-Pullman taxpayers received inaccurate tax impact notices authorizing a **1.982%** (almost **2%**) SSA tax rate for a **\$770,000** budget. Their tax bills reflected **37%** tax rate increases at **6.681%**--while all non-SSA tax rates dropped **2%** to **4.627** during Chicago’s 2009 reassessment.

To address these tax rate issues, **Raila & Associates** initiated legislation to improve the SSA notification and approval process (**HB 1883**).

Dramatic Fluctuations in Residential Exemptions

Homeowners have seen wide fluctuations to their property tax exemptions as legislators have sought to provide tax relief to taxpayers who are **seniors**, on **fixed incomes**, returning **military** personnel, and **long term** residents in the same home for a decade or more.

The accuracy of exemptions impacts the bottom line of your tax bill. Follow the links on **Raila & Associates** website to see if you are getting the breaks you deserve or how to apply for refunds. At **TaxesTooHigh.com** website, taxpayers can access **Free Research** on their prospects for tax relief.

Clients: It’s that time of year again

Send in your 2010 **Schedule E’s** or **8825 Form** showing **collected rents** to update your files. As we examine tax relief prospects don’t be surprised if we recommend an **appraisal that sets a value as of January 1st**. It’s an investment that typically pays off with lower taxes.

Suffocating BackLog of Tax Cases

Delays in State Property Tax Appeal Board (PTAB) decisions are not just a problem of increased tax appeals or under funding. Other appeal boards faced with similar issues process timely appeals when mandated to certify on deadline. PTAB decisions can take 4 to 5 years partly due to excessive extension approvals. **Raila & Assocs.** support **SB 2073** to mandate that PTAB **render tax appeal decisions by 365** days.

We're On the Web:
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About the Company

Andrea A. Raila & Associates has for 22 years assisted residential and commercial property owners in successfully appealing their taxes -- obtaining actual cash refunds, reducing assessed values or achieving savings on past, current and future tax bills. The consulting company (not law firm) educates the public on how to appeal and advocates for a property assessment and appeals system that is accurate, equitable and understandable. **Raila & Associates is a member of the International Association of Assessing Officers (IAAO) and the Better Business Bureau (BBB) with a Triple AAA+ rating.**

Andrea Raila, a highly sought after tax expert and resource for property tax issues, was a former tax appeal case reviewer with the Cook County Board of (Tax) Review. Ms. Raila served in Chicago's first Taxpayer's Advocate Office and the Cook County Assessor's Tax Policy Forum that examined and made recommendations for restructuring the county property tax system. A consultant/author to the Illinois Taxpayer's Federation Study **Taxation Without Representation — the Illinois Property Tax System**, Ms. Raila makes numerous appearances before business chambers, radio talk shows and community groups. Ms. Raila is a property management instructor and has appeared on **Chicago Tonight's** TV program.

Yes! Thank Your Legislator for Property Tax Reform

For decades, **Raila & Associates** have been leading advocates in the area of "omitted assessments" or back taxation reform. Important taxpayer protection laws tackled by Illinois lawmakers in Springfield include:

- Allowing 6 months, instead of 30 days for payment of back taxes;
- Establishing first time statutory limits (3 years) to how many years the Assessor can back tax property owners;
- Improved omitted assessment appeal guidelines and tax notice language;
- Protecting property owners against mistakes made, through no fault of their own, by allowing taxpayers a chance to appeal the Assessor's back taxation decisions to other Boards of Review

We have highlighted taxpayers concerns about the Cook County Treasurer holding more than \$150 million in taxpayers' money from overpayments and erroneously assessed property. Legislation for **automatic refunds** has not passed to date. But public debate on the problem prompted the Treasurer to start sending out notices directly to taxpayers when they are due a refund(s). Public Act 096-1159, initiated by **Raila & Associates**, helps taxpayers **reclaim uncashed government checks** issued by the Cook County Treasurer. New transparent check status procedures are available on-line at www.CookCountyTreasurer.com, homepage under **Refunds**.



Call your legislator in support of better property tax notices (HB 1883) & faster tax refunds decisions (SB 2073)

Client Tax Tips

When you receive your triennial reassessment notices or tax bills please fax them to our office at 312-587-9484.

Six Languages Spoken – Dial Ex 10 at 312-587-9494 to speak **Spanish** with our staff about your appeal. We have associates fluent in **Chinese, Romanian, Russian and Lithuanian**.

Tax Talks Helps Thousands – **Andrea Raila** has been instructing home and commercial owners on how to appeal their taxes and uncover unclaimed refunds. The company partners with **Community Investment Corporation**, and their award winning property management training program. Ask your organization to schedule a **free slide presentation** on the tax appeal process visit www.TaxesTooHigh.com or www.CICChicago.com.

A Professional Corporation - **Raila & Associates** is a professional tax consulting corporation. It is not a law firm. A lawyer is not needed for most appeals before administrative appeal agencies. However, in instances where this may be necessary or advantageous, we retain outside counsel or provide referrals.