

## VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

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### Property taxes

The story “Costly flaw in property tax break” (Page 1, Oct. 19) sought to expose abuse.

At best, it exposes the exploitation of the system’s inaccuracies, complexity and the absence of consistent procedures for applying, monitoring and auditing.

Exemptions on homes and duplex condos with two tax bills require proper allocation on each bill.

As a taxpayer with two tax bills myself, I believe the homeowner exemption should be prorated over both bills.

Like many, we were unaware that the exemption on our second bill was automatically applied by the assessor.

In the 2009 tax year, I overpaid one tax bill to cover the exemption. My certified registered letter to the assessor requesting clarification and an exemption status hearing went unanswered. In the 2010 tax year, I submitted an exemption waiver on one tax bill.

This waiver was not initiated by the assessor as reported in the story, nor was there any standard notice given by the assessor’s office that warned the exemption may be in error.

Taxpayers deserve to get notice that an exemption may be in error and an opportunity for a hearing. I support the assessor’s exemption legislation that recaptures exemptions given in error. However, the bill should be amended to allow the taxpayer, who may disagree with the assessor, an exemption hearing before an administrative review board. The flaw in the bill would require the taxpayer to hire an attorney to take his or her exemption status claim to court.

Cook County offers the most exemptions of any county in the state. Many are unknown and poorly understood. At the time, not all exemption applications appeared online. Such a system even baffles the experts.

— *Andrea A. Raila, Chicago*