

1 ISSUE ALERT 2/8/2012 Senior Tax Exemptions

MARCH 1, 2012 is the deadline for seniors to file applications for Partial Tax Relief Exemption, County, City, School and applications for School Tax Relief (STAR) Exemptions for both Basic STAR and Enhanced STAR. Check with your local government Assessor's Office for applications and requirements since income levels for local government and school districts vary throughout the county.

Your application (s) must be accompanied with the following documentation: **(Please note documentation of income for STAR Exemption is different than documentation of income for Partial Tax Relief Exemption.)**

For STAR Exemption: Proof of residency (current driver's license or Motor Vehicle ID with matching address); Proof of income (front page of **2010** Federal or State income tax filing or a **2010** form 1099).

For Partial Tax Relief Exemption: Proof of residency (current driver's license or Motor Vehicle ID with matching address): Proof of income (front page of **2011** Federal or State Income tax filing or **2011** 1099)

Residents of Saratoga Springs can get assistance on **Tuesday February 28** at

11:00 am – 12:30 pm at the Senior Citizens Center of Saratoga Springs on 5 Williams Street Saratoga Springs or call the Saratoga Springs City Assessor's Office and ask for Mary at 587-3550 extension 2552.

#2 ISSUE ALERT 2/8/2012 Voter ID - Update

It's been called voter suppression legislation, Jim Crow legislation, a civil rights issue, legislation to maintain the integrity of the electoral process and legislation to ensure that everyone's vote counts. What is it? It is voter identification legislation. In its strictest application it is legislation that requires a state issued photo ID at the polls in order to vote. (For more detail on the various forms of voter ID laws across the country go to <http://www.ncsl.org/?tabid=16602#Details>)

Twenty states do not have laws requiring voter ID at the polls prior to 2011. The importance of this issue to the voting public falls on both sides of the question, "What is the intent of voter ID legislation?"

This legislation is seen as "voter suppression" similar to Jim Crow era poll taxes. A study by the Brennan Center found that as many as 11 percent of eligible voters do not have a government-issued photo ID. That percentage is even higher for seniors, people of color, people with disabilities, low-income voters, and students. Many citizens find it

hard to get government photo IDs, because the underlying documentation like birth certificates (the ID one needs to get ID) is often difficult or expensive to come by.

US Attorney General Eric Holder is quoted as saying the legislation is intended ...“to restrict in ways that are subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, the ability of the American people to cast their ballots.” He is currently reviewing voter ID laws in Texas and South Carolina for "preclearance" under the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

In 2005 this type of legislation was endorsed by the Commission on Federal Election Reform headed by President Jimmy Carter and former Secretary of State James Baker to protect the integrity of the ballot.

Likewise, in a 6-3 decision, the Supreme Court ruled that such laws were not “overly burdensome” and that their stated goal, to reduce election fraud, was a legitimate state function. This decision upheld the voter ID law in Indiana.

Is voter ID legislation contrary to the Twenty-Fourth Amendment, which outlawed poll taxes and the subsequent Voting Rights Act of 1965? Or is it legislation truly intended to eliminate the “vote early and often” practice as Supreme Court Justice Stevens states in his majority opinion in the Indiana Voter ID Law ,”There is no question about the legitimacy or importance of the State's interest in counting only the votes of eligible voters.”

An interesting question to contemplate, research and answer for yourself. Pending legislation in New York State is as follows: **New York**--A 2868, A 3373, A 6867, A 9041: (all carried over from 2011).