July 23, 2023

Governor Josh Shapiro
508 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Shapiro,

I am writing to you today about property tax reform that was promised but that promise was never kept. I tried talking to my state representative and state senator, but it seems it is not a topic that they wish to discuss. I get the impression that they prefer to wash their hands of this topic. I even put together a presentation about my ongoing efforts and research into why property tax reform is needed and even met with my state representative back in May which I gave him his own copy of my research, but I guess he feels the extra $350 that will be given in property tax/rent rebate will make Pennsylvania a better place to live. Does our elected officials even know how much property owners pay in property taxes? An extra $350 doesn't even make a dent in what people are paying either in taxes or rent. But to get that rebate you must have paid receipts. There are many who cannot afford to get those paid receipts. My oldest sister moved to Florida last year. She informed me that when she lived in Pennsylvania, she had to save $400 a month for her property taxes. In Florida, her property taxes are less than $400 a year.

What service is a property owner supposed to be receiving who no longer have a child in school? Back in 2020 a tax collector put that question out there. In her letter she wrote that Pennsylvania tax laws have a purpose, for services received. How can this tax law be legal for school taxes when those who have no children in school receive no service for this tax? This is what started me searching to get an answer. As of today, I have never found that answer. Even my state representative nor my senator could answer me. I also feel that our property tax law is unfair. Either you pay your property taxes, or we will sell your home for unpaid taxes. NO ONE should have to lose their home over property taxes, especially those who are not receiving any service for their school taxes.

Property owners cannot continue to do this alone and paying the huge expense of what is needed to fund our schools has become very expensive and overwhelming. Schools raise taxes just about every year and frankly there are people out there that have no more to give. I live in the Canon McMillan

school district, and they raised my school taxes again this year. I am a widow; I have no children in school, and I am retired. These increases year after year are taking their toll not only on me but others that I have spoken to. Everyone needs to step up to help or our government needs to take over and fund our schools 100%. There are parents out there with school age children that pay no school property taxes because they rent. But there are property owners with no school age children who are forced to pay for those children's K-12 education or lose their home. This isn't right.

Our elected officials need to step up and do better. I recently wrote a letter to the editor of the Observer Reporter. It was published on July 17th. In that letter I mentioned an editorial that was in the Observer Reporter where it talks about property tax relief in the state of New York. They have a program called STAR. Their program provides property tax relief based on the property owner's income rather than their property value. I can think of several ways to take this huge expensive burden of funding our schools off the shoulders of property owners. Why can't our elected officials do the same. Property tax reform is very long overdue. It is time to start thinking outside the box before more property owners become homeless.

Please help make Pennsylvania a better place to live for our widow and widower neighbors. They already lost their spouse; they shouldn't have to lose their home as well.

Regards,

Cheryl Bertolino
President/Founder
Emails to Heaven, Inc.