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May 20, 2013,

Chicago Tribune  
Chicago Sun Times  
Franklin Park Herald Journal  
Daily Herald

Dear Editor,

*Many suburban Cook County taxpayers have experienced massive property tax increases over the past few years.*

*Despite falling prices in the real estate market, residential Cook County property taxes have continued to escalate. Many have claimed that the numerous foreclosures that have resulted in homes sitting empty and not currently paying property taxes, are the cause. However, the true underlying cause for many suburbs was the passage of real estate tax breaks for commercial and industrial properties by the Cook County Board. Rates were reduced for commercial and industrial properties from 38% and 35% respectively to 25%.*

*If you are a residential taxpayer in River Forest or Riverside, where there is little industrial property, you were relatively unaffected. But residential taxpayers in towns such as Franklin Park, the fourth largest manufacturing center in Illinois, or Bridgeview, that has a high level of manufacturing, saw their tax bill sky rocket.*

*In Franklin Park, hundreds of homeowners, still fully employed, go into foreclosure because of tax bills that escalated by as much as \$ 3,000 in one year.*

*The passage of an ordinance to reduce the tax burden on businesses and encourage job creation or relocation to Cook County was an admirable effort. Nevertheless, the unexpected consequence caused massive tax increases for residential property owners in industrial concentrated towns.*

*If the economy is truly to recover, we must stabilize our neighborhoods and protect our homeowners. I appeal to the Cook County Board of Commissioners to immediately convene a task force that makes providing our homeowners with tax relief a priority. Families must not be pushed out of their homes by massive real estate taxes.*

*I urge the Board to take action on this critical matter without delay.*

Barrett Pedersen  
Village President