



**ILLINOIS
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November 14, 2024

TO: Chicago City Council
CC: Mayor Brandon Johnson
RE: O2024-0013679

Chicago City Council Members:

Good morning, City Council. My name is Staci Slattery, and I am with the Chicago Association of REALTORS® representing our *over 16,500 members*. As REALTORS®, extending homeownership opportunities to as many people as possible is a cornerstone of our advocacy. That is why we are here today urging you to reconsider ANY AND ALL increases to property taxes, or the creation of new real estate taxes, to fill this budget gap.

Our clients, your constituents, have been asking us how higher property taxes will affect their ability to buy the home they've been saving to buy, keep the home they've saved years to acquire, or invest in their neighborhoods. We've had to have some hard conversations with clients, and there are hard conversations you all must have between now and the end of the year. **But just like our clients, REALTORS® have a few questions we'd like to ask, too.**

First, REALTORS® ask: is making advanced pension payments fiscally responsible if the effect of making the payment can hurt seniors? Because senior households in Logan Square, Irving Park, and Avondale, ALREADY tend to pay at least 20% of their fixed incomes on property taxes.

REALTORS® ask: aren't ARPA funds meant to 'rescue' our city's residents from the effects of COVID revenue shortfalls? Because households in New City, Lower West Side, Bridgeport, McKinley Park, Chicago Lawn, Greater Grand Crossing, Englewood, and West Englewood ALREADY tend to pay more than 20% of their income on property taxes.

REALTORS® ask: did you know that even without an increase from the city last year, over 600,000 Chicago homeowners were hit with a property tax increase of about 3%? And more increases are already expected. Higher property taxes are putting homeownership further out of reach in the south and west sides, thereby increasing outward migration. That leads to higher property taxes for residents who can withstand an increase. Voting for even a small increase is voting for additional increases for residents later.

REALTORS® ask: do we want more vacancies and less investment on the south and west sides? In Englewood, West Garfield Park, Washington Park, West Pullman, Roseland, Auburn Gresham, 10 to 15% of property owners are not able to pay their bill. This is a major indication of future tax sales and foreclosures to come.

REALTORS® ask you to remember: any increase to property taxes will decrease homeownership rates in our city, and population rates in our neighborhoods. Less residents will be able to access the generational wealth needed for families to thrive.

City Council: this is your chance to send a message to residents, including our worried clients, that you want them to stay in Chicago and thrive. We urge a vote not to increase property taxes at all.

Thank you for your time.

Staci Slattery
Chicago Association of REALTORS®