

NEWS

RENSSELAER COUNTY LEGISLATURE

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Republican Legislators Vote for Extension of Additional 1% Sales Tax in Rensselaer County

Troy—After introducing three resolutions opposing increased taxes and fees at the state level, Rensselaer County Republicans did an about-face and voted to continue the 1% sales tax increase added to the 3% already imposed on county residents until November 30, 2011. Enacted as a temporary measure in 1994, Rensselaer County's 1% tax increase has been extended every two years since that time to augment county revenues.

Deputy Minority Leader Keith Hammond (D-East Greenbush, North Greenbush and Poestenkill) said, "Rensselaer County Republicans are always opposed to taxes they don't control; but can't wait to pass taxes they do control!" The property tax level in Rensselaer County has been raised more than 107% since the Republicans have been in control of County government.

"The Republican legislators who spoke on the floor seem to believe that the anticipated \$17 million that would be raised by the tax increase comes out of nowhere. But Rensselaer County residents would shoulder almost all of that tax hike. I don't understand how my colleagues across the aisle can keep a straight face while they bash the State for increasing taxes, then turn around and do the same thing," said Legislator Kevin Harrington (D-East Greenbush, North Greenbush, Poestenkill).

"Extending this tax increase yet another time gives no incentive to control the cost of government in Rensselaer County. We've seen the county tax levy more than double in size since the Republicans took charge. Cutting spending, not increasing taxes, has been our proposal year after year," said Legislator Brian Zweig (D-East Greenbush, North Greenbush, Poestenkill).

"We made a number of suggestions to reduce spending: cut all vacant but funded positions in the budget; rescind all pay raises for elected officials; end all non-essential, non-mandated travel and mailings; and return over \$800,000 currently held in a fund controlled by the Majority in the Legislature to the taxpayers to help reduce the tax levy," added Legislator Flora Fasoldt (D-Sand Lake, Schodack, Nassau). "All of these suggestions have been ignored and county residents continue to face ever-rising taxes."