

Dear Representative Yingling & Representative Flowers:

Senate Bill 1932 (Manar/Carroll) created the bi-partisan, bi-cameral Property Tax Relief Task Force, and charged the Task Force with the responsibility to identify causes of increasingly burdensome property taxes throughout Illinois; nationwide best practices; and make recommendations to assist in short-term and long-term property tax relief. This task force was created because specific members of the House Democrat Caucus stated they required it in exchange for support of SJRCA 1 (“Graduated Tax” Constitutional Amendment).

The process over the last several months included three meetings of the full Task Force and numerous meetings of the several subcommittees created within it. House Republican members participated in the subcommittee meetings and offered numerous recommendations, most of which are not included in the DRAFT Final Report. For example, reforms that would directly reduce the burden on senior citizen homeowners; or reduce the burden of State mandates — both of which would provide short and long-term property tax relief — are not included.

Aside from the failure to include House Republican substantive reform ideas, the DRAFT Report includes recommendations from subcommittees that never debated and approved policy recommendations for consideration by the full Task Force. The full Task Force failed to meet the first deadline for an initial report, submitted to the Governor and the General Assembly, as specified by statute. The full Task Force last assembled on October 28, 2019. Our request to call the full Task Force to order prior to December 31, 2019, in an effort to give its members the opportunity to fully debate and approve each recommendation in the DRAFT Report in a public setting was denied. Rather, you insisted last week that the 8 caucus co-chairs must approve the content of the DRAFT Report on behalf of the remaining 80 members of the Task Force. Furthermore, a draft report was not shared until late in the day on December 23, 2019, and authorization to share the DRAFT Report with caucus members was only given a few days ago. This process lacks transparency and infringes on the rights of the Task Force members to provide input on a document to which you propose to attach their name.

Notwithstanding the improper and artificially condensed timeframe, we have solicited feedback from our caucus members. Based on the feedback received to date, we believe that we cannot authorize our caucus to approve a DRAFT Report that (1) fails to address core issues that impact the failed property tax system in Illinois, and (2) has been improperly presented by a few members of the Task Force without proper process and public consideration.

Meaningful, substantive property tax relief for beleaguered Illinois homeowners is critical, and the issue deserves serious and meaningful deliberation and reform ideas. Previous efforts by the General Assembly or Executive Branch to reform the broken property tax system through blue ribbon commissions and task forces have failed. Unfortunately, it appears this Task Force is one more example of history repeating itself.

Sincerely,

Joe Sosnowski
House Republican Co-Chair

Deanne Mazzochi
House Republican Co-Chair