

MARK J. SEGRIST
VICE-CHAIR, CUMBERLAND TOWN COUNCIL

TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF
LD 1345: "AN ACT TO PERMIT MUNICIPALITIES TO ESTABLISH BY ORDINANCE A PROGRAM
FOR PARTIAL DEFERRAL OF PROPERTY TAXES FOR SENIORS."

Sponsored by Rep. Stephen Moriarty

Before Joint Standing Committee on Taxation

April 12, 2023

Senator Grohoski, Representative Perry, and distinguished members of the Joint Standing Committee on Taxation:

My name is Mark Segrist and I reside in Cumberland where I currently serve as Vice-Chair of Cumberland's Town Council, as well as Chair of its Finance and TIF committees. I am pleased to appear before you today and speak in support of LD 1345, "An Act to Permit Municipalities to Establish by Ordinance a Program for Partial Deferral of Property Taxes for Seniors," a bill that I very proudly – along with others in my community – helped to author.

I support LD 1345 for several reasons:

First, it **directly addresses the issue facing seniors in my community and across the State;** namely, how do you continue to afford living in your home while also living on a pension or fixed income and struggling to pay the seemingly perpetual property tax increases year after year. This bill seeks to address that issue head on.

Second, the bill **provides municipalities with the local option** to enact a municipal ordinance and create such a program. In other words, it does not mandate or otherwise require that a community create such a program, but rather, merely provides the local regulatory body with the legislative authority and option to do so, should they choose and should it be in the benefit of their community.

Third, the bill **provides an additional tool for municipalities** to use in their efforts to fight against the effects of increasing property taxes on seniors. Specifically, it allows municipalities and their staff – who often may know residents on a more personal basis – with the opportunity to discuss a wider range of property tax mitigation strategies, whether it's in the form of rebates or property tax deferrals, to find the one that best fits the needs of each resident, based on their age and income level.

Finally, the bill **provides much needed predictability and valuable assurances** to municipalities and their residents that any deferred property taxes will be repaid to the municipality in full and that such programs will remain in place for qualifying residents and will not be amended or revoked based solely on the next legislative election.

In other words, I support LD 1345 because it allows municipalities to create their own partial property tax deferral programs, while also ensuring that both seniors and the municipalities in which they reside, are financially protected. In short, as part of this Committee's work to review and analyze the various tax-related bills seeking to amend or modify LD 290, I would respectfully request that this Committee consider supporting LD 1345 as part of that process.

Thank you in advance for your time, courtesy, and consideration of this important piece of legislation, not only for seniors in my community, but across the state. Thank you again and I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have.