

## Time is Right for Property Tax Solution

**P**roperty taxes. Many Hoosiers don't like them. Very few understand them. And, maybe most important, Indiana's current system is not working effectively to meet today's needs.

Although entering my 26th year as a participant in some form in the Statehouse legislative process, the last major property tax reform in Indiana predates my experience. That was in 1973, when Gov. Otis Bowen's property tax control plan was put into place.

Our roundtable discussion (beginning on Page 24) examines the current dilemma. In that article, it is pointed out that the system has evolved to the state raising more than \$2 billion a year to send to local governments to use to provide services (and serve as local property tax relief). The outlay now trails only K-12 education in the amount of annual state spending.

Also, in the roundtable, State Rep. Peggy Welch (D-Bloomington) says she's tired of the Band-Aid fixes that have been utilized. Temporary homeowner credits or other short-term moves don't solve a problem that impacts business, local governments and all property taxpayers. In addition, the tax assessment process must be streamlined and made more professional.

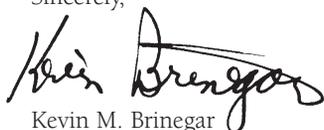
Any additional local taxing authority as part of the solution must be accompanied by greater government consolidation, efficiency and enhanced accountability. Tax burdens cannot be shifted to the business community – such a move would offset the recent enhancements to our business climate and imperil our economic future.

It is time to summon the political will to institute thoughtful change in this area. This is one of a number of important issues the Legislature faces in this 2007 session.

Indiana must not become complacent with the accomplishments of the past few years. A budget deficit was erased and much positive legislation, from telecommunications reform and transportation funding to various economic development initiatives, has been enacted.

There is great need for both political parties to cooperate in this important budget year. All Hoosiers deserve nothing less. There is far too much at stake as Indiana strives to be a leader in the 21st century global economy.

Sincerely,



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