



COOK COUNTY ASSESSOR'S OFFICE
FRITZ KAEGI, ASSESSOR
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**ASSESSOR FRITZ KAEGI CELEBRATES SIGNING OF AUTOMATIC SENIOR CITIZEN
PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTION BILL BY GOVERNOR PRITZKER**

HB 961 provides for the automatic annual renewal of the senior citizen exemption

Chicago - Cook County Assessor Fritz Kaegi joined Illinois Governor JB Pritzker and Illinois House Assistant Majority Leader Fred Crespo today as the Governor signed Illinois House Bill 961 into law.

The bill, championed by Cook County Assessor Fritz Kaegi and sponsored by Rep. Crespo and Sen. Laura Ellman, amends the Illinois Property Tax Code so that a person who has been granted a Senior Citizen Homestead Exemption in Cook County will not need to reapply for the exemption every year, as was required.

"With the signing of this new law, I am pleased to see our state government speaking with one voice," said Assessor Kaegi. "Through intergovernmental cooperation and technological modernization within our office, seniors in Cook County will no longer be burdened with the need to reaffirm their age each year."

Seniors who received the exemption last year do not have to re-apply. Seniors not currently receiving the exemption, and homeowners turning 65, must apply for the senior exemption in 2020 and their exemption will then automatically renew each year. The Assessor's Office is sending out notices to those who already receive the renewal and others who may be eligible for it.

"Skyrocketing property taxes are hurting local seniors, many of whom live on fixed incomes. Last year we learned that more than 25,000 seniors in Cook County did not file for cost-saving exemptions," said state Representative Crespo. "This legislation will reduce bureaucratic hurdles and red tape that seniors face, ensuring they receive much needed relief without having to reapply every year."

"I'm grateful to Representative Crespo for his continued advocacy on this issue," said Assessor Kaegi. "With necessary safeguards in place to prevent fraud, our office is implementing this bill now for the hundreds of thousands of seniors who are eligible for it."

To allow for the automatic renewal of the Senior Citizen Homestead Exemption and prevent fraud in its application, the Cook County Assessor's Office is required to conduct an audit on every Senior Citizen Homestead Exemption at least once every three years.

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“There are many operational changes our office can make to serve taxpayers better,” said Assessor Kaegi. “We will continue to deliver on our promise to reform the property tax system in Cook County. We have had great support for SB 1379, the Data Modernization Bill, and look forward to a vote on it in the House this spring.”

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Attachment: Governor J.B. Pritzker signs HB 961 into law at the James R. Thompson Center in Chicago, IL as Assessor Fritz Kaegi, Representative Fred Crespo, and other legislators observe.