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Assessor Kaegi Announces Support for Improving Property Tax Savings for Persons with Disabilities and Low Income Seniors

Cook County- Cook County Assessor Fritz Kaegi announces his support for SB1975, a bill now pending in the Illinois General Assembly that provides for the automatic renewal of the Persons with Disabilities Exemption and streamlines benefits for low-income seniors. The bill's chief sponsors are Senator Laura Fine and Representative Michelle Mussman.

"Our legislators and the advocates with AARP and Access Living should be commended for this bill, which will ease the burden on some of our most vulnerable residents," said Assessor Kaegi. "As the office that administers property tax exemption savings for all Cook County taxpayers, I'm proud of this collaboration to reduce the barriers toward lower tax bills."

SB1975, which passed the Illinois Senate with overwhelming bi-partisan support, would amend the Property Tax Code so that a person who has been granted a Persons with Disabilities Exemption would not need to reapply for the exemption every year, as is the case now.

"I'm proud to work with Assessor Kaegi and all the supporters of this bill to streamline exemption procedures for people with disabilities and low-income seniors," said Rep. Mussman. "I'll continue to look for ways to ensure everyone receives the property tax exemptions they deserve."

"People with disabilities, who are disproportionately low-income, unemployed, or underemployed, often have to go through extra steps in order to receive disability-related benefits," said Mary Rosenberg of Access Living, an advocacy agency for and led by people with disabilities. "By renewing the exemption automatically, thousands of disabled people will no longer have to jump through a needless hurdle of re-certifying that they are still disabled."

As amended in the House, the bill would also streamline the process by which low-income seniors prove eligibility for savings that allow them to remain in their homes while on a fixed income.



“A long-standing problem with many property tax relief programs is that they are underutilized because residents do not know they exist or they are difficult to access,” said Adam Ballard, associate state director of AARP Illinois. “SB1975 helps to address this challenge and is critical to improving access to this essential program.”

SB1975 must now be voted on by the House, and reaffirmed by the Senate before the Governor can sign it into law.

Since 2019, the Assessor’s Office has processed auto-renewals for the 325,000 people who receive the Senior Citizen Exemption. Approximately 280,000 senior exemptions are auto-renewed each year, with approximately 45,000 seniors required to re-apply as part of an audit and verification process. The auto-renewal and audit process reduces costs and has significantly reduced the number of seniors who do not receive the exemptions they deserve.

“We look forward to the General Assembly passing this bill, which will help modernize operations in the Assessor’s Office and ease an unnecessary burden for more than 20,000 eligible people in Cook County,” Assessor Kaegi said.

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