

April 2, 2012 Testimony Measure 2 Taxation Committee

Good Morning Chairman, Senators and Representatives,

My name is Susan Beehler, a homeowner and resident of Mandan ND 701 220-2297 suzybbuzz@gmail.com

As the state of North Dakota we have a great opportunity in our state to show we are innovative or we are callous towards the needs of our people in our state. 1130 AM radio says you are “legislators with more balls.” compare d to the whimpy Minnesota legislature (http://www.twincitiesnewstalk.com/player/?station=KTCN-AM&program_name=podcast&program_id=davisandemmer.xml&mid=21943827)

The people need your leadership to tell them if they do not like something in our government in the way of conducting government business. Assure the people we can come to our legislature and get help, we the people do have a voice. We elect you to be our voice. You can be champions or whimps.

I am asking you to take the lead and tell the people they have the right to be a part of the system, acknowledge our right to go to a vote to change the way we do business.

Instead of acting like we are making you work, and whining about messes and hours and quitting if the going gets too tough, put on your big boy and big girl pants and lead.

Pledge to the people if they choose Measure 2 you will not cut fire and police

(<http://www.inforum.com/event/article/id/355999/>), meals on wheels

http://bismarcktribune.com/news/opinion/mailbag/vote-no-on-property-tax-ban/article_e7fc0402-4614-11e1-b702-0019bb2963f4.html, and throw veterans “under the bus” <http://www.inforum.com/event/article/id/355989/>. Restore the trust : http://bismarcktribune.com/news/opinion/mailbag/measure-is-just-too-drastic/article_4ba9d4ae-7aca-11e1-a9c3-001a4bcf887a.html?mode=comments#ixzz1qsgHdXNY, ensure them you will abide by their vote. Stop the fear tactics by not being a part of it. State to the people it is up to them to decide and you will carry out their wishes of abolishing property tax if this is what they choose.

I have heard legislation is proposed to discontinue the exemptions for the farmers’ homes. What are you as legislators doing? NO! Minnesota legislature is talking of just exempting businesses don’t you get it, this is not about who gets what exemption and who gets stuck holding the short straw of the deal, this is about real reform and the right to our property.

Century Code In North Dakota our state legislature has allowed a perpetual lien on our property, the taxes owed is not affected by any statute of limitations (57-02-40 <http://www.legis.nd.gov/cencode/t57c02.pdf>) and this lien can be exercised if you become delinquent on your property taxes (57-02-40 <http://www.legis.nd.gov/cencode/t57c22.pdf>) currently in the third year of becoming delinquent. I think it is appalling murder and property taxes, are given the same level of enforcement, no statute of limitations. Crimes of rape, child abuse, elder abuse even corruption all have statute of limitations.

Our homes should be ours not yours, not my cities, not my counties.

Did you know in Mandan we have a \$100 million dollar debt? Of that debt 60% to 70% is developer driven, property tax pays this debt off. Why as a citizen moving here 20 years ago should I now have a legacy to leave my children debt and if they don’t pay they would not be able to keep the home of their youth?

You, the legislators are just as much part of the problem because you have given local an ineffective, inefficient way to tax for local services, property tax. It is time to get rid of the beast and stop trying to tame it with “relief”. It has been over 6 years since I have been trying to do something locally our debt has double. You can not grow a community on

property tax. The newcomers we welcome to our community if they build new, they do not have to pay tax, they get an exemption, the businesses that come get an exemption, and everyone gets a break while the loyal ones staying in the community pay for the services and the debt. We have opportunity for growth knocking on our doors; we should not have to bang on the state's door to be heard.

Did you know we have 641,708 property tax parcels in North Dakota?*

If each property tax parcel paid \$1200 dollars;

We would have \$740,049,600 dollars to use in our communities

Total property taxes levied in 2010 \$720 million#

The State has \$400,000,000 reserved property tax relief.

North Dakota Association of Counties*

Marcy Dickerson State Tax Dept#

I would much rather be paying the \$1200 than having to pay double this, what I have been paying on house with less than 125K in value. You, the legislature have messed around with it and messed around with it and now it is an untamable beast.

Property tax system is broken I will list why and there are problems in the whole state:

1. Fargo gives out about 44% in discretionary exemptions compared to the property tax collected, these are by choice. bbuz.biz
2. These Fargo exemptions are decided by a committee which does not keep minutes (illegal) before going to their city commission for approval
3. Dickinson has a guy moved here from Colorado who does not know how to find exemptions in his computer program, actually he could not find any documents I requested, he did not know where to look for them.
4. Williston continued to give exemptions, incentives up until December 2011, to encourage growth, I guess they did not see the boom arriving in 2009 yet.
5. Mandan city commission was going to grant an exemption for property which was not even in the city yet.
6. The Fargo person answering the phone did not give me correct definitions for appraised value, taxable value, market value.
7. Mandan did not know when a person has a fire or a natural disaster you can ask for an abatement (a reduction in property tax <http://www.legis.nd.gov/cencode/t57c23.pdf>). It is unheard of according to the city assessor, but the law does allow it, they just won't or don't want to do it.
8. The Mandan assessor could not even recognize the homes with the current addresses because his photos were 20 years old. He thought they were not the same homes.
9. In Mandan a property exemption stayed on an exemption even after the exemption had expired.
10. The Dickinson assessor could not produce any documents because he did not know where to look for them.
11. In Mandan If your property on your block goes up and value and everyone else goes down in value, no one in the assessor's office or your city commission can tell you why.
12. The city of the Mandan Mayor admits to adding a finished basement but not having it assessed.
13. Mandan continues to give exemptions despite the same developers having land come back for delinquent taxes.
14. In Jamestown a property was assessed without being looked at, actually this probably happens in every city.
15. The cow doesn't jump over the moon and nurses can't fly.

Those are just some of the reason I feel the property tax is very sick and needs to be put out of its' misery, even a flying nurse(a commentator on Grand Forks Herald blog) I don't think we can make it better, because it keeps getting sicker and sicker. YesM2.co M2is4U

Get rid of property tax, we got rid of personal property tax back in 1969 and the sky did not fall. The personal property tax was 20% of revenues for local communities then. Property tax revenue in Fargo is 24% of their budget.(http://www.bbuz.biz/what_percent_of_my_citys_budget_is_property_tax) If you can't seem to bring yourself

to not having the local entities collect something to replace property tax; give cities and counties with home rule charter or all local entities the authority to collect local income tax. It could really help places like Mandan because we have many coming from Bismarck to work but not very many places to provide sales tax to us. Stop messing around with "relief" it is not working, it is not sustainable.

You can say it is going to be so messy and difficult, be whimps or you could have "the balls" to change it and North Dakota will be Legendary.

Please help the people, the property tax payers of North Dakota. The choice is yours whimps or champions.