

Taxpayers push to transfer property tax burden to income taxes

A press conference was held Aug. 1 on the stairs outside the Cook County Treasurer's Office at 118 N. Clark, to kick off the Taxpayer Campaign for the Illinois Property Tax Relief Amendment Referendum which will be on the Statewide Ballot on Nov. 5.

On Aug. 1, the second payment of the city's 2023 property taxes were due. Illinoisans paid a median \$5,055 in property taxes in 2022, the second-highest rate in the U.S. and meaning homeowners shelled out nearly 2% of the value of their homes to support government.

Ben Franklin once said that the only things that are inevitable in life are death and taxes. But he didn't say that it's inevitable to be taxed to death by Illinois' runaway property taxes. Former Gov. Pat Quinn and a group of taxpayers launched a taxpayer campaign to win passage of the Illinois Property Tax Relief referendum.

The referendum which was placed on the ballot by resolution of the Illinois General Assembly states, "Should the Illinois Constitution be amended to create an additional 3% tax on income greater than \$1,000,000 for the purpose of dedicating funds raised to property tax relief?"

Illinois has the second highest property taxes in the nation and Illinois taxpayers



Cook County property owners paid more in median property taxes in 2022 than the typical homeowner living in California's Orange County, Los Angeles County or San Diego County.

pay more in property taxes every year than income taxes and sales taxes.

Homeowners in Cook County and each of the collar counties around it paid more in median property taxes in 2022 than the typical homeowner living in California's Orange County, Los Angeles County or San Diego County.

Overall, eight Illinois counties ranked among the 100 most expensive for property taxes in the U.S. The Illinois property tax is not based on ability to pay and is a complicated and unfair levy on the state's 3,077,768 residential property taxpayers. In

Illinois, a homeowner's property tax bill is based on two primary factors: the assessed value of your property and the amount of money your local taxing districts requests to operate the next year. Schools receive most of the property taxes – nearly two-thirds across Illinois.

A growing share of property taxes have gone to government pensions, which continue eating more school and local government resources. Illinois ended the 2023 fiscal year with an estimated \$211 billion in unfunded state and local pension liabilities.

The Amendment would establish a dedicated property tax relief fund by requiring Illinois millionaires to pay a 3% surcharge on their annual income tax returns.

According to most recent data, Illinois has 77,323 millionaires whose annual returns account for more than \$626 billion in adjusted gross income. A 3% surcharge

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on this millionaire income would fund at least \$1.5 billion in annual property tax refunds for distribution to Illinois' more than 3 million property taxpayers.

"The referendum offers a once-in-a-generation opportunity for Illinois voters to reform an unfair upside-down tax code and give significant annual property tax relief to millions of Illinoisans who urgently need help," said Quinn.

City agrees to allow protestor marches

City officials have reached a tentative agreement following weeks of litigation to allow a coalition of feminist and LGBTQ+ groups to march down Michigan Ave. before the Democratic National Convention - Aug. 19 to 22.

The city has agreed to a one-mile route to be made available on Aug. 18, starting at the Chicago River, marching south and ending at the John Logan monument at the south end of Grant Park.

One protest group called Bodies Outside of Unjust Laws: Coalition for Reproductive Justice & LGBTQ+ Liberation, filed an application to march in January for an Aug. 18 march that was to start at Water Tower Place. At least two other groups have also sued the city for rejecting their permits to march during the DNC convention, near the United Center and the McCormick Place.

At a July 31 court hearing, the city agreed to issue a permit along the shorter route. The protest groups sued with the help of the ACLU after the city denied their permit.

During the permit hearing, Chicago police said they were refusing time off

for officers during convention week, and that the full complement of officers, along with Illinois State Police and Cook County Sheriff's deputies, would be available.

For over eight months this newspaper has been getting weekly press releases promoting nationwide public protest by the anti-Israel, pro-Hamas protestors, but as of deadline this week we have not yet seen any public announcement on what their plans are for convention week in Chicago.

Pro-Palestinian groups sought a large protest route near the convention but were denied a route by city officials.

Organizers with the U.S. Palestinian Community Network applied for the permit for a march on Washington Blvd., Damen Ave. and Lake St. near Union Park and the United Center. The city denied the request and proposed instead an alternate route taking marchers along Hermitage and Maypole avenues.

The two main reasons given for denying the application were interference with the security perimeter established by the Secret Service and concerns about a large

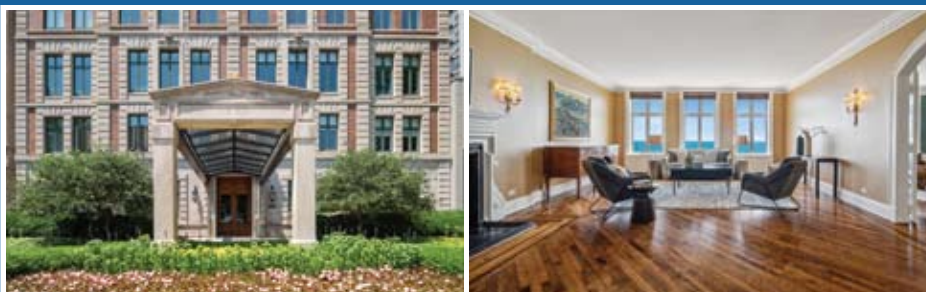
group of people gathering near a fence where people could get crushed.

On April 15, 40 Chicago residents were arrested while blocking the I-190 expressway entrance to O'Hare International Airport in an anti-Israeli protest. Obstruction of traffic is a city ordinance violation that includes jail time. The Cook County State's Attorney's Office previously dropped its

misdemeanor charges against the group on June 4, but the city's law department opened new charges that same day.

Dozens of Palestinian protesters also gathered in River North on May 19, organized by the Coalition to March on the DNC. The group of organizations said that they were planning demonstrations during the DNC convention week.

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