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Senators Cindy Rosenwald and Lou D'Allesandro: The GOP isn't going to lower your taxes

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Sen. Cindy Rosenwald



Sen. Lou D'Allesandro

RECENTLY, our Republican Senate colleagues have rolled out their plan for the state's surplus under the heading of "property tax relief." It's a fantastic headline; what Republican running for higher office wouldn't want to try and claim actions that lower New Hampshire's prohibitively high property taxes? However, there are three major problems with their claim of lowering property taxes.

First, it isn't true. Actions taken by Republicans last session during the budget process and this year during the legislative session have done absolutely nothing to lower property taxes. In fact, Republicans slashed the budget for property tax drivers like public school funding, putting an increased burden on our cities and towns to make up the funding gap. Democrats have consistently tried to require cities and towns to use state aid to lower property tax rates, but Republicans have refused.



Second, many proposals noted in their "package" that will lower property taxes were introduced by Democrats. For example, SB 412, highlighted in the Republican property tax relief package, is sponsored by Senate Deputy Democratic Leader Cindy Rosenwald. SB 412 represents \$5 million in property tax relief that, unlike one-time political stunts passed in last year's budget, will continue to decrease the property tax burden.

Finally, Democrats have continued to propose legislation that specifically aims to lower property taxes over the long term. For example, last year Democrats proposed restoring a portion of the state's contribution to retirement costs, but Senate Republicans turned down this proposal that would significantly cut local costs paid by property taxpayers. This year, a similar proposal, HB 1417, has been sponsored by the late Democratic Leader Renny Cushing. Once again, Democrats are seeking to ensure the state makes good on its promise to share the burden of employer costs for municipal employees. We remain hopeful that the bipartisan support HB 1417 received in the House shows some level of recognition from our Republican colleagues of their previous mistake.

Another example of recent Democratic proposals to lower property taxes was SB 426, Senator Jay Kahn's bill to temporarily adjust the formula for calculating adequate education grants. Republicans rejected SB 426 which in turn, meant the rejection of \$34 million in property tax relief that will now have to be shouldered by local property taxpayers. While our Republican colleagues continue to argue that their budget increased public school funding, the fact of the matter is that there is now a gap of nearly \$100 million dollars that will need to be made up by local property taxpayers. Not only that, but the "relief" provided in the last budget through the reduction of the statewide education property tax (SWEPT) was a one-time political stunt that does nothing to lower property taxes in the long term.

The list goes on.

It comes as no surprise that Republicans looking ahead to political campaigns would want to start putting together a platform to run on — particularly after nearly two years of legislation seeking to undermine the rights of so many Granite Staters. However, when compiling a platform, it is critical to make sure the legs are sturdy. Between claiming credit for Democratic ideas, actively rejecting legislation that would lower property taxes, and hiding behind one-time changes that will negatively impact taxpayers in the long run, the platform Republicans are attempting to build simply has no legs to stand on.

Senator Cindy Rosenwald of Nashua represents Senate District 13 and Senator Lou D'Allesandro of Manchester represents Senate District 20. Both are Democrats.