Indiana Commission on Local Government Reform
Summary of Public Input: July 23 – August 15, 2007

The excerpted statements below summarize public comments received by the Indiana Commission on Local Government Reform through the commission's web site, e-mail address, or by mail between July 23, 2007 and August 15, 2007. Comments specifically about property taxes have been forwarded to the Commission on State Tax and Financing Policy.

- Too many counties and politicians. Combine counties 4:1 and there will be less need for high numbers of government officials.
- High property taxes have had a negative effect on rental business and on tenants' quality of life.
- An area drainage ditch cuts my yard in half. Township office says they cannot do anything about it. Township office personnel are incompetent.
- If state doesn't do anything to help we may have the highest forclosure rate in the nation.
- Cut spending. Slightly raise sales tax on nonessentials. Do not increase income or property tax. Move away from socialism and back to liberty.
- Eliminate township trustees, assistants, and advisory boards in Marion County. Consolidate all Marion County township fire departments and consolidate with Indianapolis Fire Department ($20 million savings).
- Eliminate property tax and move to a user tax.
- Use sales tax instead of property tax.
- Increase lottery hours to make extra money and apply to property tax relief Not concerned about the amount of taxes, but that we do not get much bang for our bucks. Suggest Policy Governance [www.carvergovernance.com] as an alternative.
- Please mandate that local government allow citizens to vote on issues dealing with tax increases and/or large expenditures. Two capital projects in Ft. Wayne, Ft. Wayne School System Improvement Project and baseball stadium, provide evidence of the need for this solution.
- Don't overlook the small business community when addressing property taxes. Reassessment of commercial properties in Hendricks County were inconsistent with neighboring properties and out of line with taxes assigned to similar properties which have been
- Eliminate property taxes. They do not reflect accurately a persons current financial situation. Increase other types of taxes.
- Reduce the number of local elections and require they be held on the same dates as governor, senators, congressmen, president, etc. Eliminate township functions that can be handled by the County, such as tax assessor.
- Move from current system to a property transfer tax. Buyer pays tax, seller pays real estate commission. If sales tax is below average market sale price, then average market sale price is used for tax calculation
- Look at www.fairtax.org
- Eliminate property taxes. Use sales tax to share burden equally.
- Eliminate residential property taxes.

- Good luck with challenge. HEA 1362 (2006) sets out a process that involves citizens and units of government. This bill gives us all the ability to make local government what we feel local government should be for us and not a cookie-cutter process.
- Adopt uniform property taxes or sales tax on home purchase. Tax assessors are inept.
- I support to eliminate property taxes and the city organizations that develop and maintain assessment records.
- Please do not sell any more of Indiana to foreigners and stop outsourcing. Use Indiana residents for work needed to be done and thereby create more jobs for Indiana residents!
- Cities should be operated/overseen by professional city managers. Establish one group of designs for new schools by architects for various level of schools to save money. Standardize teacher's salaries. Standardize police and fire department salaries. Increase cost of license plates and give to local governments through counties who distribute/share to cities and towns. Provide parks and recreation departments throught districts instead of by cities. If you keep property taxes, charge a level amount for all property owners.
- Tax exemptions and credits for homeowners have driven cost of housing up. It is proportionally unfair to tenants.
- What are the consequences of reducting or eliminating township trustees. Are the duties of county assessors the same as township assessors? If trustees are eliminated, how will fire department receive future funding?
- Eliminate property taxes and downsize local government. Increase sales tax and/or local income tax or tax food.
- The current property tax problems must not be resolved at the expense of our ability to fulfill the mission to serve communities.
- Abolish property tax system and the state income tax. Use sales tax system.
- It is time for units of government to look at ways to combine personnel and assets to better serve the public and hold down costs.
- Eliminate property tax.
- The residential developer should pay for infrastructure (costs of growth to a community).
- Serious concerns about the consolidation of local libraries.
- Use *luci2*, [a planning simulation software available at http://luci.urbancenter.iupui.edu/]. Restructure using bottom-up reform. Members of Zionsville-Eagle-Union consolidation committee can provide perspectives on the bottom-up approach.
- Eliminate townships. Combine 30% of the counties. Eliminate all cities and towns in Marion county. School districts should be countywide. Eliminate economic development and community development departments. Consider land value taxation.
- Please insure all areas in Indiana have access to public libraries. Township trustees have not taken the total welfare of their residents into account by not alloting money to libraries. I do not support the Township Trustee structure.
- Unhappy with personal property tax system.
- It doesn't look like there is a representative of the Southern part of the State. Is there any hope in adding someone from the this area? Bloomington is not far enough South to qualify. Thank you.
- 20 ways to cut residential property taxes: new construction pays property tax, sales tax; increase building permit fees, etc; use Economic Development Income Taxes to offset residential property taxes; increase diesel fuel taxes, etc.; elminate tax abatements, tax increment financing, TIF recovery, corporate welfare (single factor sales apportionment, tax credits, grants, etc.); eliminate not profit status for institutions, etc.

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- Abolish property tax system, cut government spending, and switch to fair tax or consumption tax.
- Why so many counties, assessors, taxing districts? Change or abolish property taxes.
- To operate more efficiently and effectively, Indiana cities and towns should hire professional managers rather than elect mayors.
- Put a percentage of collections for past due tax bills into the benefit/retirement fund for our public safety employees.
- Require experience and service and perhaps education for county and township assessors, coroners, county and city engineers, and county surveyors.
- Some good ideas came out of an Association of Indiana Counties workshop several years ago: reconsider roles and responsibilities of commissioners and council members (single executive? Staggered elections for three commissioners? Role of county council?); change surveyor to an employee of County Highway Department; combine the auditor and treasurer positions; in each county, evaluate the functions performed by county and townships; and elect state senators every 6 years and state representatives every 4 years (same for congressional representatives).
- Repeal the eight-year term limits on local county offices. Get college graduates to run in some of the smaller counties.
- Considered the need for an additional circuit breaker with a cap but realized it may not collect enough revenue. State's ability to realistically assess property values is limited. Market value assessing does not consider the fact that older homes are more expensive to maintain.
- Do not understand why each county sheriff is entitled to personally keep 10% of the county's tax collection.
- Attached a town resolution articulating the "sense of the town council" regarding the current state of property taxes in IN that requests a special legislative session summer 2007
- Short term solution: give 100% credits for all property tax then immediately adjust the sales and/or income tax systems to cover. The government needs to get out of the business of running schools and offer vouchers for private schools. Offers help as an activist
- Support repealing property taxes.
- Recommend removal of the state from the assessed value business (see "Indiana-Correcting the Current Taxing System"); concentrate Department of Local Government Reform efforts on area of budget certification and tax levy approval; and make debt service once again an independent levy.
- Suggests Eric Miller's plan at www.repealpropertytaxes.com
- Replace county commissioners with county managers.
- Eliminate township government in any populated area.
- Eliminate property tax.
- Remove the property tax.
- Look at tax abatements. See review at www.indytaxdollars.typepad.com.
- Call for a direct democracy.
- Will the commission address government waste, in particular, riverboat gambling money, misuse of power, and government money that belongs to the tax powers?
- Consolidate police and sheriff's departments. Go to regional form of government. Eliminate reduncy in government entities.
- Own rental property. High property taxes and removal of tax exemptions has greatly increased the cost of doing business.

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- Do not redo the constitution, it is treason. Do not streamline government to make it easier for the wealthy.
- Do not rewrite the 1861 state constitution. Read Article 13. Get rid of the traitor.
- Stop residential real estate tax. Take population over 18 years and divide into bugetary needs for "Residents' User Fee" with exemptions.
- No property taxes.
- Eliminate retirement benefits for all elected officials. Review the taxing policies of unederground pipelines. Elevate the role of township trustees in local spending control.

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