

## Officials zero in on tax-hike safeguard

### Legislators: Voters' bills should meet expectations

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The push to better protect taxpayers who have paid more than they were told to expect under the state property tax cap system received a significant boost Wednesday.

Lawmakers said they plan to extend the deadline on a proposal that seeks to protect taxpayers from higher-than-expected tax bills after voters approve tax-rate increases.

"I think everyone agrees we want to close the loophole," said state Rep. Barbara Flynn Currie of Chicago, majority leader of the Democrat-controlled House. "We want to continue working on this."

A Daily Herald analysis of 25 school districts in Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake and McHenry counties published Sunday showed that, over the past five years, the districts collected \$204 million more than most school officials would have said to expect.

Without the extension, House lawmakers would have had until Friday to make any decision on the proposal.

With the additional time, Currie said they now plan to bring in municipal leaders and tax experts to review the proposal and ensure that any change to law won't cause further complications with the tax cap system.

The hearings likely will take place after the House returns from break April 25, Currie said.

With the addition Wednesday of state Rep. Kathleen Ryg, a Vernon Hills Democrat, the proposal introduced by first-year state Rep. Mike Tryon, a Crystal Lake Republican, now has 18 sponsors in the House.

Already, county clerks, tax extenders and even some school officials have said they support a change in the law.

"I do think it's important that people know, taxpayers know, exactly what they're asked to approve," Lake County Clerk Willard Helander said. "I'm pleased that this will be clarified."

Helander also said she's in favor of additional hearings on the proposal, particularly so experts have a chance to review the wording of the change to guarantee the legislation does what lawmakers intend.

"I think it's always important to talk to the people who do the job," Helander said. "Calling in the tax extenders is very important because the specific language is extremely important."

At least one tax extender has already taken a look at the language.

"I think it's great," said Paul Hinds, the tax extender in DuPage County. "It's a good thing for voters. We'll keep an eye on it and see what happens from here."