

LETTER TO EDITOR – Property Tax Burden (OCTOBER 2025)

The holiday season will soon be upon us and cheers – the tax man cometh. In November, homeowners will receive their annual property tax bill from the county treasurer. And don't be surprised if it increased from last year.

The rise in property taxes on primary residences in Oklahoma is capped at 3% per year. As properties increase in value, the property tax "owed" increases, usually 3%. Sometimes this is higher than the rate of inflation.

Even when you don't sell your home and your income stays the same or decreases, you must still pay these increased taxes or risk losing your home. This is a taxation on unrealized gains and is grossly unfair. Over time, it can force some people to sell or lose their home.

When seniors retire, their income is reduced and this is a time when medical expenses usually increase. The loss of a spouse can also reduce household income even further. Property taxes, which can be hundreds of dollars a month, become a burden. Some seniors may be forced to decide if they can keep their home by cutting day-to-day expenses or sell and move down or move in with relatives. These are people who have already paid property taxes (through ownership or rent) for 40 years or more and they deserve better.

And what about young people who want to buy their first home but can't qualify for a payment that includes several hundred dollars a month in property tax?

I understand taxes are necessary to fund schools and local municipal services. But at what point do you say "Uncle"?

When property taxes become such a burden that people are being taxed out of the American Dream, it's time to start looking for efficiencies and alternative sources of revenue, instead of just automatically turning to property tax increases as the answer.

Reform is needed. I'm not sure exactly what that should look like at this time, but the conversation needs to get started. You can learn more, express your thoughts, and keep up with the conversation online at: www.PropertyTaxReform-ok.com.