

LINCOLN Resolution: Strengthening Taxpayer Protections Against Unfair Property Taxation and Supporting Alternatives to Ongoing Property Taxes Passed

WHEREAS, homeowners frequently sell their properties for less than the government-assessed value, resulting in taxpayers having paid excessive property taxes for years on a valuation they never actually realized; and

WHEREAS, counties currently face no financial consequences for over-assessing properties, leading to unjust enrichment at the expense of taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, Wyoming's current property tax system imposes a perpetual burden on homeownership, creating financial insecurity for families, retirees, and future generations; and

WHEREAS, until property taxes can be phased out entirely, Wyoming should implement assessment reforms, refund mechanisms, and explore alternative revenue models that ensure fairness, transparency, and true property ownership;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Lincoln County Republican Party urges the Wyoming Legislature to enact the following taxpayer protections and reforms:

1. Adopt an Acquisition-Value Assessment System

- Set the taxable value of a property based on its purchase price at acquisition, with annual increases in assessed value capped at no more than 2%, unless the property is sold in an arm's-length transaction or undergoes significant new construction.
- Family Transfer Exception: Transfers of real property between immediate family members (including parents, children, legal guardians, and grandchildren) shall not trigger a reassessment, and the property shall retain its existing assessed value unless significant improvements are made.

2. Refund Excess Taxes with Interest and Penalties for Over-Assessed Properties

- Require counties to refund excess property taxes paid (with interest and penalties) when a property is sold in an arm's-length transaction for less than its most recent assessed value.
- Interest on the overpaid taxes shall accrue from the date of the first over-assessment through the date of the property's sale, at the greater of the county's average investment return or the statutory interest rate on tax refunds.
- Counties shall also pay a penalty equal to 10% of the excess taxes collected, ensuring consequences for inaccurate assessments and incentivizing fair and accurate valuations.
- Arm's-Length Transaction Requirement: Refunds shall only apply to arm's-length transactions, defined as sales between unrelated parties under no compulsion to buy or sell, acting in their own self-interest.

- Below-Market Transfers Exclusion: In cases of family sales, gifts, or other below-market transfers, the county assessor shall have discretion to deny or adjust refund claims based on an independent determination of fair market value.

3. Reduce the Current 4% Valuation Cap to No More Than 2%

- Lower the annual property valuation increase cap from 4% to 2%, or tie it to inflation, whichever is lower, for those not yet under the acquisition-value system.

4. Explore a One-Time Sales Tax Model to Replace Ongoing Property Taxation

- Begin evaluating a long-term transition from annual property taxes to a one-time real estate sales tax, assessed at the time of purchase.
- This sales tax would be payable upfront or in installments over a maximum of 10 years. Once paid in full, the property would be free and clear of any ongoing local property taxes.
- This model would protect long-term homeowners from rising taxes, secure full ownership rights, and give buyers clear expectations and timelines for tax obligations.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that this resolution be submitted to the Wyoming Republican Party for consideration at the state level, encouraging all county parties to unite in seeking immediate taxpayer protections, fair valuation practices, and long-term alternatives to property taxation in Wyoming.

Submitted by Dawn Marquardt, Lincoln County State Committeewoman