

Public Comments Emailed to Representative Berta Gardner on HB 305

From: Rev. Glenn C. Petersen [<mailto:centrev@gci.net>]

Sent: Wednesday, February 01, 2012 4:46 PM

To: Rep. Berta Gardner

Subject: church tax exemptions

Representative Gardner,

As a pastor of the Lutheran (ELCA) church for 35 years, perhaps you might welcome my adding 2 cents to the conversation about property taxes on church-owned properties.

First, if it is to merit a tax exemption, it really should be church owned and have church use. Typically, that would mean property that has the sanctuary, education wing, parking lot, etc.

Also, a church-owned parsonage, for housing the pastor of the congregation and his/her family, would apply.

In our tradition, the pastor is the person responsible for teaching and preaching the word and administering the sacraments. Tax exemption for housing teachers that are much like public school teachers seems to stretch fairness beyond reason. Ordaining people to serve as custodians of a church building or to run the sound and light system for church services makes no sense whatsoever. It's a scam! That's my 2 cents.

Rev. Glenn C Petersen
Central Lutheran
Anchorage

From: Paige Hodson [<mailto:paigeh@alaska.net>]
Sent: Tuesday, January 31, 2012 9:27 AM
To: Rep. Berta Gardner
Subject: RE: Berta's Briefings - Introduction of the "Property Tax Fairness Act"

Hi Berta,

I am not one of your constituents, but am receiving your newsletter.
I fully support yours and Rep. Holmes efforts on this legislation.
I served on the MOA Board of Equalization for approximately 15 years and was very upset when the Prevo-special-legislation was rammed through to supercede existing assessment law.
Thank you for trying to correct this unfair situation.

Paige R. Hodson, SRA
903 W. Northern Lights Blvd., Suite 220
Anchorage, AK 99503
(907) 274-8258 phone; (907) 274-8259 fax
paigeh@alaska.net
<http://paigehodsonappraisal.appraiserxsites.com/>

Fro

m: Gwen Gregory [<mailto:apawesternstates@ak.net>]

Sent: Thursday, February 02, 2012 9:54 AM

To: Rep. Berta Gardner

Subject: HB305

Hello Berta,

I am a constituent of yours and wish to tell you that I am wholly in support of your efforts to introduce this bill #305, changing the way tax exemption has been allowed for certain housing. While I am in support of exemption for churches and pastor housing, to include teachers' residence of private schools, (or others they select) should not be the burden of the public. I am not singling out ABT, I feel it should apply to any religious institution. I want to let you know I totally support you on this. Please move forward, and if there are other contacts I can send this message to I would like you to let me know who they are and I will voice my opinion to them also (whether they are for or against).

Thank you very much,

Gwendolyn Gregory

5916 Mego

District 24

Proud to say I have participated in my right to vote since I moved to Alaska in 1978! (even the boring ones!)

From: Mary Ann Brockway [<mailto:maron@gci.net>]

Sent: Monday, January 30, 2012 9:27 PM

To: Rep. Berta Gardner

Subject: Property Tax Fairness Act

Thank you for your newsletter. I completely agree with the Property Tax Fairness Act that you are introducing and hope that you can get it passed.

Mary Ann Brockway
4800 Kupreanof St.
Anchorage, AK 99507

From: Barbara Garner [<mailto:bebg42@ak.net>]

Sent: Monday, January 30, 2012 10:48 PM

To: Rep. Berta Gardner

Subject: Religious Tax Exemptions

Hi Berta,

Please add my name to the list revoking tax exemptions for religious based teacher housing. That includes also maintenance, other non-certified, non-ordained employees within the church.

I'm curious: do other AK church-based schools own their teachers' homes? Do they too receive the exemption?

In the Tudor - Lake Otis area there are a handful of buildings housing small religious groups. I assume they have a small membership. If building is owned by the church, I'd guess they do not pay property tax, such as the Rescue Mission's R-3 lots north of Tudor.

What about the buildings that are leased, rented to a church group? Wouldn't think it likely, but do the property owners receive a different tax base for housing a religious organization?

Suspect these are questions for the MOA tax office.

-Barbara Garner

From: Tam Agosti-Gisler [<mailto:tamag@gci.net>]

Sent: Tuesday, January 31, 2012 9:55 PM

To: Rep. Berta Gardner

Subject: Re: Berta's Briefings - Introduction of the "Property Tax Fairness Act"

Thank you! Tam Agosti-Gisler

From: Angela [<mailto:stormyweather@gci.net>]
Sent: Monday, January 30, 2012 9:00 PM
To: Rep. Berta Gardner
Subject: RE: Berta's Briefings - Introduction of the "Property Tax Fairness Act"

I agree, we need to put an end to the exemptions for religious teachers.

Angela Helms

From: Dave Catchpole [<mailto:dcatchpole@gci.net>]

Sent: Thursday, February 02, 2012 9:31 AM

To: Rep. Berta Gardner

Cc: Rep. Mike Doogan; Rep. Charisse Millett; Sen. Kevin Meyer; Sen. Hollis French

Subject: HB 305

Dear Representative Gardner,

I applaud your action to introduce HB 305 and stop this cheating of Anchorage residents by Jerry Prevo. I'm outraged at the way this charlatan continues to improperly get tax breaks in the name of religion. You may recall how he enlisted the aid of then Senate President, Ben Stevens, to have then Senator Lyda Green amend an unrelated House Bill, supported by then Senator Con Bunde, while the latter was out of the room, to expand Prevo's property tax exemptions to include just about anybody associated with the running of his church. That action was a total disgrace which, unfortunately has never been fixed – probably because of lack of attention – and I still have copies of the several emails that I wrote to Con Bunde about it. The perpetrator on behalf of Prevo was of course Glenn Clary, an Administrator at the Anchorage Baptist Temple, using his influence as Treasurer of the Alaska Republican Party. Perhaps now there is sufficient anger from Anchorage residents that the Legislature can reverse its previous action and return the law to exempt only one person/property per church/ministry from property taxes. Let Prevo and co choose who gets it, but ensure that not more than one person/property does. This kind of cheating of the local community does not bode well, and the Legislature should fix it as soon as possible.

I wrote to my Senator, Kevin Myer, on this back on January 19th, but as yet have not received a reply, so I don't know his position on this. One would hope that he supports fair play on property taxes.

Sincerely,

David Catchpole

From: Leland Wilson [<mailto:leewilson@gci.net>]

Sent: Monday, January 30, 2012 8:01 PM

To: Rep. Berta Gardner

Subject: Property tax fairness

Thanks Berta for addressing the inherent unfairness of that law passed in 2006. I certainly hope the 2 committees and the legislature understands the burden that exemption puts on every other property taxpayer in the municipality.

Lee Wilson

leewilson@gci.net

From: Tim Pearson / Brian Chen [<mailto:timandbrian@mindspring.com>]
Sent: Monday, January 30, 2012 6:48 PM
To: Rep. Berta Gardner
Subject: Re: Berta's Briefings - Introduction of the "Property Tax Fairness Act"

Hi Berta,

I think you've hit the nail on the head about the teachers. Why are some teachers treated differently than others is a great point. Please reverse "Prevo's Law" passed a few years ago. I wish this could be taken one step further. Why should I, an individual, have to pay for city services used by churches? My best interests would be served by all churches paying property tax just like any other business. Let the members of the church give donations to the church if they want to help their individual church defray the cost due the city on property taxes. I wonder how much lower my taxes would be if everyone (including churches) paid their fair share.

There you have it... my 2cents worth,
Tim Pearson

From: Helen Allen [<mailto:akgranny1@gci.net>]

Sent: Wednesday, February 01, 2012 2:29 PM

To: Rep. Berta Gardner

Subject: Property Tax Fairness Act

As described in your recent e-mail, I would support this legislation.

Helen Allen

4208 Needle Circle

Anchorage, AK 99508

From: Tricia Franklin [<mailto:tricia@gci.net>]
Sent: Monday, January 30, 2012 7:11 PM
To: Rep. Berta Gardner
Subject: Property Tax Fairness Act Feedback

Thank-you Berta!

It is a step in the right direction to put a stop to tax exemptions for teachers at religious institutions. I would support further measures that do not allow ANY tax exemptions for religious properties. I find it offensive that this exemption is so often and easily abused, especially by the largest and richest congregations in town. Adding the exemption for religious teachers in 2006 has pushed the exemptions far beyond the original intent. As you have said, it is not fair. Many religious organizations in Alaska are money making businesses that can easily afford to pay municipal taxes on their investment properties. As a homeowner, I am tired of financing religious business by paying their taxes.

Your proposal sets a reasonable limit. It is a start. Thank-you!

Tricia Franklin
3000 Emory St
Anchorage, AK

From: Sharon Zandman-Zeman [mailto:sharon_zz@hotmail.com]

Sent: Monday, January 30, 2012 8:00 PM

To: Rep. Berta Gardner

Subject: RE: Berta's Briefings - Introduction of the "Property Tax Fairness Act"

Stay righteous! You're doing a great job. Thanks!

From: Herbert Berkowitz [<mailto:herberg@gci.net>]
Sent: Thursday, February 02, 2012 7:30 AM
To: Rep. Berta Gardner
Subject: Good Job!

Berta,

Kathryn and I totally agree with your proposal in the Legislature to take away the property tax exemption of property owned by churches and occupied by teachers. We wish it were politically feasible to go much further than that.

Herb Berkowitz

From: Robert Auth [<mailto:authrm@gci.net>]
Sent: Wednesday, February 01, 2012 11:41 AM
To: Rep. Berta Gardner
Subject: Re: Berta's Briefings - Introduction of the "Property Tax Fairness Act"

Dear Berta Gardner,

Thank you so much for introducing this legislation. Some religious institutions do a good deal of good in the community. And some prey on their followers, the public and tax payers. I agree with your attempt to ensure a bit more fairness into the system. I also think that religious leader's homes should lose their tax exemptions when the property hits a certain amount of value. Why should a religious leader be living in a mansion anyway?

Margaret Auth

From: Linda Kaye Harter [<mailto:anch2020@gmail.com>]

Sent: Friday, February 03, 2012 2:40 PM

To: Rep. Berta Gardner

Subject: Re: House Bill 305

On Feb 3, 2012, at 1:36 PM, "Linda Kaye Harter" <anch2020@gmail.com> wrote:

I wholeheartedly endorse Reps. Gardner and Holmes efforts in House Bill 305..it's long overdue.

EVERYONE enjoys police, fire, roads, snow removal, etc., etc.....we ALL should pay our fair share.

Linda Kaye Harter

From: Kris N. Anderson [<mailto:def90@gci.net>]
Sent: Thursday, February 02, 2012 12:17 AM
To: Rep. Berta Gardner
Subject: HB 305

Anchorage, AK

Dear Representative Gardner:

Thank you so very much for introducing HB 305! I know it takes a lot of guts to do that, I sincerely admire and support you for doing so.

It's high time these religious zealot freeloaders begin to pay their own way instead of leaching off of a struggling society.

Let me know if I can be of service to you.

Sincerely,

Kris N. Anderson (Mr.)
2860 W. 80th
Anchorage, AK 99502
def90@gci.net
907.248.4600
907.764.0833

From: Elizabeth.Burdette

Sent: Tuesday, January 31, 2012 7:30 AM

To: Rep. Berta Gardner

Subject: Re: Berta's Briefings - Introduction of the "Property Tax Fairness Act"

Berta, I agree with you. I do believe that the religious teacher exemption should be eliminated. Thank you.

Beth Burdette
Anchorage, Alaska

. FYI, I am a 50% disabled vet and I do get the tax exemption for the Vets.

"Our collective lineage nurtures individual power."

From: Kirk Hastain [<mailto:khastain@gmail.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, January 31, 2012 4:59 PM
To: Rep. Berta Gardner
Subject: Repeal abusive tax breaks for Relig. Prop.

We agree that it is time for tax fairness. We think all properties should pay something.

All non-profits included.

Kirk & Linda

From: LauraB [<mailto:meanqueens@yahoo.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, January 31, 2012 5:25 AM

To: Rep. Berta Gardner

Subject: Re: Berta's Briefings - Introduction of the "Property Tax Fairness Act"

I support the Property Tax Fairness Act. Thank you for your work, Laura Baldwin

From: Mary Ann Brockway [<mailto:maron@gci.net>]

Sent: Monday, January 30, 2012 9:27 PM

To: Rep. Berta Gardner

Subject: Property Tax Fairness Act

Thank you for your newsletter. I completely agree with the Property Tax Fairness Act that you are introducing and hope that you can get it passed.

Mary Ann Brockway
4800 Kupreanof St.
Anchorage, AK 99507

From: Double Fours [<mailto:eighthehardway@yahoo.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, January 31, 2012 1:15 PM

To: Rep. Berta Gardner

Subject: Re: Berta's Briefings - Introduction of the "Property Tax Fairness Act"

Hello Berta,

I agree with you but I think your legislation does not go far enough. Fair would be if a church is only allowed exemption on one property just like every citizen is.

While I support the purpose of churches, I do not support their being able to mass huge fortunes and for their pastorage to live like kings when there are thousands here in Anchorage alone who are homeless.

Leonard Lamb

-----Original Message-----

From: Glenn Clary [<mailto:gclary@ancbt.org>]

Sent: Thursday, January 26, 2012 1:48 PM

To: Sen. John Coghill; Sen. Bettye Davis; Sen. Fred Dyson; Sen. Dennis Egan; Sen. Johnny Ellis; Sen. Hollis French; Sen. Cathy Giessel; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Charlie Huggins; Sen. Albert Kookesh; Sen. Lesil McGuire; Sen. Linda Menard; Sen. Kevin Meyer; Sen. Joe Paskvan; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Tom Wagoner; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Gary Stevens; Sen. Joe Thomas; Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Rep. Alan Austerman; Rep. Mike Chenault; Rep. Sharon Cissna; Rep. Mia Costello; Rep. Alan Dick; Rep. Mike Doogan; Rep. Bryce Edgmon; Rep. Anna Fairclough; Rep. Eric Feige; Rep. Neal Foster; Rep. Les Gara; Rep. Carl Gatto; Rep. Max Gruenberg; Rep. David Guttenberg; Rep. Mike Hawker; Rep. Bob Herron; Rep. Lindsey Holmes; Rep. Kyle Johansen; Rep. Craig Johnson; Rep. Reggie Joule; Rep. Scott Kawasaki; Rep. Wes Keller; Rep. Beth Kerttula; Rep. Bob Lynn; Rep. Bob Miller; Rep. Charisse Millett; Rep. Cathy Munoz; Rep. Mark Neuman; Rep. Kurt Olson; Rep. Pete Petersen; Rep. Lance Pruitt; Rep. Berta Gardner; Rep. Dan Saddler; Rep. Paul Seaton; Rep. Bill Stoltze; Rep. Bill Thomas; Rep. Steve Thompson; Rep. Chris Tuck; Rep. Peggy Wilson; Rep. Tammie Wilson

Cc: Glenn Clary

Subject: Property tax exemptions

Dear Alaska Legislator,

The following is a response from Dr. Jerry Prevo concerning recent questions about religious tax exempt properties. He requested that I forward this information to you.

I will be in Juneau, February 1-4, if you need further information about the historical timeline concerning tax exemptions for property owned by religious organizations.

Glenn Clary
907-952-2281
gclary@ancbt.org

To Whom It May Concern:

The Anchorage Baptist Temple is not against paying property taxes. ABT pays more than \$45,000 a year in taxes on approximately 14 pieces of property. With legal counsel ABT has requested tax exemptions on properties that qualify.

Because of an inquiry by the Anchorage Daily News, the Anchorage Baptist Temple hired two law firms and asked them to look at its' tax exempt properties. Both attorneys were asked to determine if ABT had improperly asked for tax exemptions and if so how to make it right. If there was a problem, I wanted to clear it up before the Daily News made it an issue.

Both law firms advised ABT they believed the church was in compliance with the law. The Daily News quotes one attorney saying ABT is in compliance and attached is a letter from the other law firm's attorney saying he believes we are in compliance. Of course the final decision will be made by the city's tax assessor. ABT has been cooperating with that office's inquiries.

ABT believes it has properly requested tax exemptions based on legal counsel. It seems this issue comes up about every time "special rights" for homosexuals comes up in our city which is coming up in April. If passed, these "special rights" for homosexuals will take away the rights of religious groups, churches, organizations, businesses, religious people, and individuals. I have opposed "special rights" for what the Bible calls immoral behavior since the 70's. It seems these recent accusations are again a move to diminish my opposition to these "special rights".

ABT feels they are fortunate in that the city's tax assessors' office will be looking for the facts rather than fodder to write a newspaper story and if the church's legal counsel has been mistaken, we look forward to correcting any discrepancies and paying any taxes due.

Pastor Jerry Prevo

Attorney Kevin Clarkson was our attorney quoted in the paper that we were in compliance with the tax exempt law. Kevin has done work for the Republican Party. The other attorney's letter is below. Attorney Amodio has done work for the Democratic Party. We thought it was important to have an opinion from both to eliminate any accusations of political favor.

REEVES AMODIO LLC

ATTORNEYS AT LAW

December 30, 2011

To the congregation of the Anchorage Baptist Temple:

Pastor Prevo came to me on Dec 22, 2011 and asked me to look into way the church has been handling its tax exempt properties. He understood the Anchorage Daily News was planning to attack him regarding the church's handling of tax exempt properties. He asked me to look at the situation to see if he or the church had done anything wrong and, if so, what needed to be done to make it right. After reviewing the situation and relevant material, I believe that Pastor Prevo and the church have acted properly and in accordance with law regarding the church's tax exempt properties. I do not believe he or the church has done anything improperly or contrary to law. I am preparing a more detailed letter explaining my conclusions that Pastor Prevo and the church are free to release to whoever they think appropriate.

Sincerely,

Reeves Amodio LLC

Direct Phone (907) 222-7104

Direct Facsimile (907) 222-7199

E-Mail tom@reevesamodio.com

500 LSTREET Suite 300 ANCHORAGE Alaska 99501

Telephone (907) 222-7100 Facsimile (907) 222-7199 Website www.reevesamodio.com