

Legislation Text

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Authorizing Philadelphia City Council's Committee on Legislative Oversight to hold public hearings on the Board of Revision of Taxes' governance and assessment methodology.

WHEREAS, The Board of Revision of Taxes (BRT) has failed to accurately assess Philadelphia's 568,000 properties for decades. Despite state law mandating accurate annual assessments, the current assessment system only reassesses a small number of properties each year; and

WHEREAS, The BRT mailed 14,095 reassessment notices earlier this year. Of those notices, 13,330 had higher assessments, increasing the average property tax bill by \$680. Some of the reassessments increased property values by as little as 25% while others were increased by more than 236%. These large increases come in the midst of a national economic down turn; according to the National Association of Realtors, Philadelphia's median sales prices decreased by approximately 7%; and

WHEREAS, For the past four years, the BRT has touted the Actual Value Initiative, also known as the Full Value Initiative, as the panacea for assessment problems. The Initiative depends wholly or in part on a Computer Assisted Mass Appraisal system. Unfortunately, despite years of work, hundreds of man hours and millions of tax dollars, the CAMA system still produces inaccurate data. These inaccuracies are evidenced by the numbers provided to City Council for its review and outlined in the *Philadelphia Inquirer* on September 13, 2009; and

WHEREAS, In addition to the BRT's failure to properly or accurately assess properties, a number of questions regarding the agency's governance have been raised. As such, City Council and the Administration have been working cooperatively to determine what changes, if any, are necessary to implement. These changes could range from shifting the BRT's assessment duties to another City agency to dismantling the agency altogether; now, therefore be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA That authority be given to the Committee on Legislative Oversight to hold public hearings on the Board of Revision of Taxes' governance and assessment methodology.