

**Times Union March 23, 2013**

## **Letter: STAR inefficient way to provide tax relief**

**To the editor**

**Published 10:15 pm, Saturday, March 23, 2013**

For many years now, the League of Women Voters of New York, together with the State Regents, the Fiscal Policy Institute and Syracuse University's John Yinger, among others, have been pointing out the School Tax Relief program's flaws in terms of its regressive, skewed distribution of more than \$3 billion per annum and stating that it needs to be means-tested.

Basic STAR (for taxpayers younger than 65) was not means-tested until 2011. Billions of dollars of STAR aid were distributed starting in 1998 to taxpayers, some unknown portion of whom had multiple homes and ample assets, both in and out of New York. Under current law, a basic STAR recipient can still be earning \$500,000, an income limitation that does not necessarily indicate a great deal of hardship.

The league believes property tax relief should be targeted to those with the least "ability to pay," through a properly structured circuit breaker. Your editorial ("Rip-offs tarnish STAR," March 8) noted official records on home ownership and other indicators of ability to pay (tax returns) are not cross-searchable or aligned.

The Legislature needs to enact a more fiscally efficient means of providing tax relief where it is most needed.

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Read more: <http://www.timesunion.com/opinion/article/Letter-STAR-inefficient-way-to-provide-tax-relief-4379679.php#ixzz2OIKHLK17>