

# Delaware is sitting pretty compared to property tax elsewhere

This past year saw something of a taxpayers' revolt in Delaware, specifically against property tax increases in several school referendums. Local ballots to pay for services directly under voter scrutiny are notoriously subject to upsets. Amid multiple layers of government taxation, school and municipal elections are among the few ways taxpayers can exert control over the rates they pay.

In Delaware, questions of financial management and growth played into vote results, along with a rising cost of living. But compared to virtually every other state in this inflationary period, Delaware's property taxes are low.

Perhaps looking at some of the other numbers helps take the sting out of prospective tax hikes here, in New Castle County at least.

First, property taxes nationwide have gone up in a big way since 2000, according to a non-partisan Tax Foundation assessment from October. Adjusted for inflation, they'd gone up 12 percent by 2005.

And New Jersey is No. 1 for the bite taken out of homeowners, amounting to a median \$5,352 on a home valued at \$333,900.

Maryland ranks 13th with median property taxes of \$2,159 on a \$280,200 home. And Pennsylvania is 14th with taxes of \$1,937 on a \$131,900 house.

Yet Delaware property taxes put this state in 39th place. Homeowners here pay a median \$806 on a house worth \$203,800.

Factor in Delaware homeowners' median income of \$63,361 and the property tax burden here drops to 45th place.

The only states that are cheaper, according to the Tax Foundation's calculations, are Arkansas, Mississippi, West Virginia, Alabama and Louisiana.

So while Delawareans can smugly watch New Jersey government struggle to give taxpayers some relief, this also explains why out-of-staters have been behind a real estate boom here. Delaware is affordable

compared to practically everywhere else.

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