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Assessor Kaegi, Joined by Lawmakers, Clergy, and Community Leaders, Calls for Reducing Barriers to Property Tax Relief for Seniors

Cook County Assessor Fritz Kaegi was joined by state lawmakers, community groups, and clergy at a press conference Wednesday morning calling for better access to property tax relief for low-income seniors.

The Assessor's Office is supporting legislation in the Illinois General Assembly ([HB4801](#), [SB1750](#)) to allow for automatic renewal of the Senior Freeze Homestead Exemption. Exemptions provide property tax savings for homeowners.

The Senior Freeze for low-income homeowners over the age of 65 freezes a property's taxable value. That prevents seniors on limited incomes from being displaced by property tax bill increases.

"We want to help those homeowners who need it the most. In this case, we can do it by making a quick, effective change that removes a serious barrier to access for seniors," said Assessor Kaegi.

"As we know, our seniors are among the most vulnerable populations of homeowners because many of them live on fixed incomes and property tax increases can threaten their ability to stay in their homes," said **State Sen. Javier Cervantes (1st District)**. "When this was brought to me, I thought this was common sense legislation that we have to get done."

Last year, more than 120,000 households in Cook County received the Senior Freeze. In November 2025, the General Assembly passed legislation to raise the income eligibility threshold for the exemption to \$79,000 by 2029.

"I want to applaud the legislature last year for passing the income increase for the Senior Freeze. But we all stand here today because there's more work to be done. This is low-hanging fruit to approve the auto-renewal," said **Pastor Cy M. Fields of New Landmark Missionary Baptist Church**. "I'm grateful for what Assessor Fritz Kaegi and all of his office has done. But this has to be only the beginning of trying to fix a tax system that is broken, because not only seniors, but just residents of the county, find themselves with a heavy tax burden."



Since 2019, the Assessor's Office has been given authority to auto-renew several exemptions: the general Senior exemption, the Persons with Disabilities exemption, and several categories of the Veterans with Disabilities exemption.

The number of recipients of the Senior exemption, available to anyone over the age of 65 for their primary residence, has increased 16% since 2019. Between 2023 and 2024, the number of veterans who received an exemption that reduced their property tax bill to \$0 increased from 3,100 to 5,300.

The Assessor's Office published a report this week on the success of these auto-renewal initiatives, which is available to read [here](#).

"I am always about trying to figure out how to make government not only more accessible for our residents, but also easier for them to navigate," said **State Rep. Will Davis (30th District)**. "Having an automatic exemption makes it that much easier for seniors, veterans and people with disabilities to navigate the county system."

"It reduces unnecessary administrative barriers, protects those on fixed incomes, and strengthens housing stability," said **Elizabeth Soto, Superintendent of the Veterans Assistance Commission of Cook County**. "Let us honor our seniors not only with words of appreciation, but with policies that protect their homes and their independence."

Photos are available [here](#).

A full video of the event is available [here](#).