

# Tax relief

## Hertzler's proposal makes sense

**C**umberland County is large. In all its 551 square miles, few places have been as rancorous in recent memory as the county courthouse in Carlisle.

From a coroner misappropriating the deceased's prescription drugs to a commissioner sending political emails on an official account to another resigning under a legal cloud, there always seems to be something happening in the county seat.

The latest episode of the Courthouse Chronicles, though, is something worthy of more introspection and study than scorn.

Commissioner Jim Hertzler is calling for the state Legislature to provide property tax relief for local owners of farms and homes by authorizing a 1 percent county sales tax.

That Hertzler, a Democrat, has the support of his Republican colleague Commissioner Barb Cross and at least the ear of Commissioner Gary Eichelberger, proves the proposal is worth far more than a cursory review.

Hertzler proposes to provide up to \$700 in property tax relief for every homeowner and up to \$1,400 for each farmstead owner in Cumberland County by imposing a 1 percent county sales tax.

The Department of Revenue would collect the tax and pass the dollars back to the county.

While costs would go up slightly for county residents, the pinch for most would be more than offset by the property tax relief.

Keep in mind that some of the tax revenue will come from visitors and those traveling through the county.

Hertzler's main focus is Cumberland

County, but his measure could potentially be implemented by other counties in Pennsylvania.

**Property taxes remain one of the top issues central Pennsylvanians worry about.**

Besides the \$42.3 million Hertzler estimates the county sales tax would generate for Cumberland, his proposal indicates Dauphin County property owners could be in line for \$51 million in relief, and York

County \$40 million.

Cumberland County can't do this on its own. It needs the state to authorize the 1 percent tax, as it did previously for Allegheny County.

Hertzler is working to gather the support of local legislators.

He needs at least one member of the Cumberland contingent — Sen. Pat Vance, Reps. Glen Grell, Stephen Bloom, Sheryl Delozier, Rob Kauffman and Mike Regan — to pick up the property tax relief baton and run with it, and the more the merrier.

Property taxes remain one of the top issues central Pennsylvanians worry about.

We call on local lawmakers to heed Hertzler's call. It makes sense for Cumberland and surrounding counties and allows spenders, including those traveling through the county, to help offset property tax for savers such as seniors and others on limited incomes.

Much more is needed to address the inherent inequities of our tax system. Hertzler's plan, though, is a good first step and deserves state debate.