



ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATIVE NEWS

ULSTER COUNTY NEWS INFORMATION
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Ulster County Legislature to State: Standardize the Sales Tax Rates

(Kingston, NY) While a Federal standardized sales tax is being debated, in an effort to address a growing internet market, New York State continues its bi-annual authority to administratively approve requests for increased local sales tax to pay for the rising cost of health care and private sector pensions. This seemingly mundane act of allowing counties, cities, and school districts to continue decade long practices of extending beyond the 3% local tax by an additional 1%, is made by fifty-two counties and five cities throughout New York State.

The cost to request and the ensuing battle for an additional 1% is taxing to administrations that are already under an immense amount of State mandates and burdens. The flexibility granted to the local leaders would enable them to secure the needed revenues without the unnecessary administrative procedures.

Ulster County experienced first-hand the position of being an unfortunate party in a tug of war between State and local leaders over what and how local sales tax should be expended. "We elect individuals at the local level to make the tough decision of how to pay for the service that is needed and how to cut the services that we don't need. Yet, New York State continues its role of pushing down requirements and forcing us to suck it up and pay," stated Ulster County Legislator Jeanette Provenzano. "This State Bill would bring the authority and flexibility of if and when to utilize the 1% increase of sales tax to the locally elected officials, where it belongs."

The loss of an estimated \$1.9 million every month from the additional 1% sales tax not being in place has dire consequences on counties that are also forced to remain below a 2% property tax cap. "The availability to access revenue has to be balanced with the County's ability to cut and save," noted Ways and Means Committee Chair Richard Gerentine. "We have redefined bare bones budgeting in Ulster County to a skeletal fiscal framework. The cuts and savings have been had and without the ability to access budget balancing revenue, services will now be impacted. It is time the State leaders understood this and give the locally elected officials the flexibility to make the local decisions."

Ulster County Resolution No. 114 passed unanimously by the Legislature at their April 15, 2014 session. It can be viewed at <http://www.ulstercountyny.gov/sites/default/files/114-14.pdf>.

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