

Legislative Commission Will Also Look at Assessment Methods

Among the hundreds of provisions in HEA 1001-2008 was a requirement for the Commission on State Tax and Financing Policy (CSTFP) to study alternatives to the existing method of assessing and valuing property. Even though the Department of Local Government Finance (DLGF) just determined that it was not the right time to make changes to the assessment rules (*see above article*), HEA 1001 nevertheless calls for them to report on the subject to the CSTFP.

Some legislators questioned the existing methods and sought changes during the session, well before the recent DLGF proposals. Interestingly however, the changes those legislators suggested were very different from both the just readopted rules and those originally proposed by the DLGF last month. In any case, the CSTFP will have an opportunity to evaluate an array of philosophies and issues, plus weigh in with its view on what method of assessment is most appropriate for Indiana.

Other related matters were also put on the commission's plate for study this summer and fall, including: 1) whether it is appropriate to require all counties to use a single, state designed software system for property taxation, and 2) the various issues surrounding the possible elimination of the taxation of homesteads. Like the assessment method debate, these items have been considered before. A single software system has been repeatedly studied and found desirable, while the elimination of homestead taxation concluded to be unfeasible.

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