

Good morning and thank you for the invitation to testify before the Ways and Means Committee. My name is Tim Arsenault, and I'm the town clerk of Vernon. I was also the Vermont Municipal Clerk Treasurers Association representative to the Act 106 working group, and I chaired the committee.

Our Committee has a group of diverse opinions, and it was sometimes like pulling teeth to get a consensus. From my point of view, as a Town Clerk and a board of civil authority chair, I strove for fairness, while trying to respect everyone's point of view. Here's my take on the recommendations.

A taxpayer should not lose the equity in their home just because it's being sold at tax sale. There needs to be a process that is fair to all. In addition, I agree that a 1500 dollar minimum amount of debt be the threshold for starting the process.

I would strongly advocate for an updating of abatement guides and mandatory training for all the parties involved. Those practices should also be available to advocates, as their services are utilized by taxpayers in this difficult situation.

A tax sale purchaser should not have the right to enter the property during the redemption period, as there are a myriad of liability issues which could result.

A one year time frame should not be shortened on tax sales of blighted properties, there should be a data base to track these processes, so we are not reliant on unsubstantiated data

Again, thank you for the opportunity