

Four states, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and New York were represented in the evening session on Developments in the Property Tax. Professor Steven Cord, a HGS trustee, pointed out the success of five cities in Pennsylvania with the graded tax, particularly the building boom in McKeesport, and the Pittsburgh Renaissance, where in both instances formerly undeveloped and underused urban areas have become revitalized with a higher tax on land. Philip Finkelstein, HGS Director in NYC, presented four alternative property tax plans for Nassau County in New York, which include a homestead exemption for one and two family dwellings and a tax on the full value of land and current assessed value of improvements. Arch Woodruff, President Emeritus of the University of Hartford, reported on the pressures for an income tax in Connecticut and Mitch Chanelis of the HGS in Boston presented the results of a program held in May at the school on Proposition 2 1/2. William Lucey of Fairhope, Alabama, a Georgist community, Mal McCarthy of Peterborough, Ontario, and Craig Cringan of Toronto briefly outlined property tax issues in their respective areas as well. Following this session, Ms. Hartzok presented a film, New Hope for Global Crisis, which prompted serious discussion on world problems, such as hunger, poverty, and the nuclear and arms race.

The second full day began with a panel of Georgist educators, including Fryda L. Ossias, a HGS Trustee, Stan Rubenstein, HGS of Long Island Director, George Collins, Philadelphia HGS Director, Harry Pollard, Los Angeles HGS Director, Mitch Chanelis and Bob Clancy of HGI, who presented their methods of teaching Fundamental Economics to adults and high school students. Richard Barbuto, Democratic candidate for a legislative seat in Westchester County, New York, spoke on the importance of reaching the "real power elite", those who are wealthy and politically active and would have the clout to put the Georgist fundamentals actively into use. Formal sessions were over by noon on the second day, when conferees gathered for a picnic lunch by the lake on the conference site, where Tillman and Eva Schafer played their guitars and sang for the group. Organizational meetings followed, including reelection of officers and a strategy planning session for the Council of Georgist Organizations.

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CENTER FOR LOCAL TAX RESEARCH RESPONDS TO LEGISLATION

Proposals to resolve the property tax issue in New York City and New York State have been analyzed by the Center for Local Tax Research at the request of the Governor's Office and legislative leaders.

The proposal drafted by the legislative leadership is criticized an attempt, probably unconstitutional, to legalize the admittedly unequitable status quo. The Center agrees, however, with the objectives of the Governor's proposed legislation, although simpler and better means are suggested to meet the goals of an equitable property tax system.

Some of the recommendations made in the responses include keeping the land portion out of the homestead exemption and retaining it throughout the state and a simpler classification system in which all land is assessed at full value and taxed with the highest class.

The analysis has been circulated throughout the city and state following the legislative session which postponed action on the issue at least until October.