

March 11, 2006

Honolulu City Council
530 S. King Street, Room 202
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

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Thank you for increasing my property taxes. I read the great news in last night's newspaper. I guess my 11 letters on property tax increase was not actually read by anyone. So tell me, did I understand correctly that only the homeowner is responsible for the entire city budget? And did my trusty 99-cent calculator from Wal-Mart correctly compute my new property tax? Let's do the math. $\$1,332,500.00$ divided by $\$1,000.00$ equals $\$1,332.50$ times $\$3.75$ will give me $\$4,996.875$ in set property taxes. When I wrote to you back on December 18, 2005, I was complaining that my new tax rate of $\$4,846.88$ was too high. I guess I should not have complained. I was better off by $\$149.99$ before you set this new bill into effect.

Forgot who I am? I'm the one that lives on a street with no sidewalks and to my knowledge no improvements in the last 18 years. But I don't want any improvements. That would just increase my property taxes even more. I'm also the one that lives on a street that has had no recent sales in years. In fact, all the neighbors are the same from when I was in grade school! I just can't believe how much we have to pay to live here and we only use the city services once a week for trash pick up. Nothing more. Send me something that explains what the city does for me that I need to pay so much in property taxes. I need a class in city services and expenses.

I did appeal my tax assessment and paid the city $\$25.00$. I hired my own appraiser and expect to pay close to $\$800.00$ for the services. But I'm still waiting for the city's tax appraiser to come and visit. I now think that the real problem is how the assessed value is computed. I even called a realtor to help with the most recent comps. Last sale in the neighborhood was $\$1.1$ million but that was back in November of 2005 so my 2006 assessed value should not have been based on that ridiculous sales price. And before that...nothing!

I own this property because my parents and grandparents are dead. If they were still alive, we would at least have had that age exemption. The increase from $\$40,000.00$ to $\$80,000.00$ does not do much when you say the property is valued at $\$1.3$ million. And I don't know anybody who can afford a home with a combined income of $\$50,000.00$ or less. How did they even qualify for the loan?

My husband just received a 60 cents pay increase. Not 28% as the taxes have gone up. Well, actually 83% the first year we were here and now 28%. Mom was right, the rich get richer, and the poor get poorer and the middle class pays for everything. I'm going to assume you're all in the rich category or something more would have been done to help residents like me.

But I must congratulate you on one thing. You have accomplished what I have tried to do for 27 years. My husband has decided to vote. I always vote but he never did. He feels everyone in office must have as he puts it, "their head up their asses" so now he will vote in the next election to get all of the incumbents out. Good job!

I won't be writing again. It's obviously a waste of time. Like mom always said, "Life is not fair". I have come to realize that there is really nothing you can do when it comes to taxes and death. We should just be happy that we have a home. If and when we are added to the homeless population, I know the city will take care of us by raising taxes to those who can afford to pay them.

Just sign me lucky I live in Hawaii,

Marchelle R. Uyeda

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