

## Henry calls on General Assembly for property tax relief

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Democratic mayoral hopeful Tom Henry said Thursday he will ask the state to help slow the increase in property taxes. Henry, speaking in front of his parents' home in Fort Wayne, said he wants the General Assembly to schedule a special session on the issue and allocate \$288 million from the state's budget surplus to be applied to a year of residential property tax relief.

"It's rainy-day fund money. It's raining right now. People are drowning in taxes," Henry said.

He also said the General Assembly should reconsider the Hometown Matters legislation, which would have given local governments the ability to reduce property taxes by utilizing other taxes such as local sales tax and supplemental income tax.

Henry said it's not asking too much for a mayoral candidate to call for the state to respond. He said he's already talked with State Rep. Win Moses, D-Fort Wayne.

Henry's opponent, Republican Matt Kelty, discussed property taxes earlier this month. Along with asking the General Assembly to cut and cap taxes, Kelty said his first annual budget would reflect zero growth in city spending as a way of keeping taxes down.

Henry called it admirable but unrealistic. "I'm not sure that's doable. I've had the opportunity to go through a number of budgets over the years," said Henry, who served on City Council for 20 years.

City Council held a public hearing Tuesday night regarding House Bill 1478, a bill that allows council to set tax policy. It offers three alternatives to local government's reliance on property taxes: incremental income tax increases, property tax relief by increasing the income tax and public safety County Option Income Tax, which can be used only when the others are. A decision regarding HB1478 must be made by the Allen County Income Tax Council by Oct. 1. City Council makes up the majority of the tax council.

Henry joined Mayor Graham Richard and county officials in asking City Council to take no action on the bill this year.

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