

*Public Hearing*  
*Local Law Introductory No. G of 2015*  
November 19, 2015

The Public Hearing on Local Introductory No. G of 2015 A Local Law Making Gold Star Parents eligible for the Veterans' Alternative Exemption was called to order by the Chair at 10:00 A.M. Eight Legislative members were present, Legislator Case being absent.

There were 4 people in attendance.

The Clerk read the legal notice as published in the official newspapers.

Terie Huseby, Real Property Tax Director spoke. "A Gold Star Parent as defined in the Real Property Law 458-a shall mean the parent or parents of a child who died in the line of duty while serving the United States of America during a period of war, Gold Star Parents shall be included in the definition of qualifying owner as provided in Real Property Tax Law 458-a part 1c and the property owned by the Gold Star Parent shall be included within a definition of a qualifying residential real property as set forth in the Real Property Tax Law 458-a, part 1, part d provided that such real property shall be the primary residence of a Gold Star Parent.

"As a resident of Tioga County, I live at 386 Anderson Hill Road, I would like to put my input into this exemption. Parents of a fallen soldier suffer each day with their loss of a child. Their child paid the ultimate sacrifice in defending our country and our freedom. Approving the Gold Star exemption shows respect and support in recognizing the sacrifice their child made for our freedom. I give my full support for the County to adopt this law."

Jim Craft, Town of Barton spoke. "I was curious what prompted this decision? Why did you come up with this?"

Legislative Chair Sauerbrey spoke. "Well it was brought to our attention that there was such an exemption and we did have someone call and ask, and at that time I did not realize that we as a County had the authority to make it happen, so I went to Terie and asked her about it and she pointed out that a while ago before we were all on the Legislative Board, it was brought to the Board and the County decided not to participate, I think is how it went, but then we decided looking at it that it was something that we felt we wanted to support."

Jim Craft spoke. "I guess my comment is that since our Commander in Chief has put our servicemen and women in harm's way, shouldn't he be picking up the tab to support the families rather than putting the burden on the municipalities. Has anybody addressed this at the State level or the Federal level and take it to that level rather than the County level?"

Legislative Chair Sauerbrey spoke. "Not as of yet."

Jim Craft spoke. "Is there any plans to do that?"

Legislative Chair Sauerbrey spoke. "No, but that certainly is an idea."

Legislator Standinger spoke. "I am obviously a resident of this County and a member of the Legislature. I am also a Veteran and I am the son of a Veteran. The point I would like to make is, this is a very small token of appreciation to the families that have lost members as a result of wars and conflicts, and I think this is the least we can do to pay those people back. I do not think there is anybody in this room that would want to get this exemption. I know I would not and if anybody in the room would, please stand up if you are willing to sacrifice a child to get an exemption. I do not believe that anybody here would do that. I have no problem at all with granting this exemption to someone who has suffered that loss."

Legislator Huttleston spoke. "I am a Veteran too, but the biggest complaint I get in the area is the Town of Owego's Veterans' exemption is a lot less than a lot of other areas. I think what we should be looking at too maybe is somehow force the Town maybe to increase the Veterans' exemption. This is a very small amount. It is really a pittance. It does not really affect the taxes to any degree, but the other thing that is important is that this has to be policed properly so somebody is not taking advantage of it that is not really eligible, and I think that you are going to be able to police it. I wish we could look at the Veterans' exemption for all Veterans including you and me, and other Veterans."

Legislator Standinger spoke. "In full disclosure, although I am a Veteran, I do not qualify for any exemption and I probably would not take it anyway if I did qualify, but I do not see that happening, so I will not be forced to make that decision."

There being no further comments, the hearing was adjourned at 10:07 A.M.