

Unshackle Upstate: Cap without exemptions, or no cap at all

Posted By [Jon Campbell](#) On May 17, 2011 @ 2:20 pm In [Uncategorized](#) | [1 Comment](#)

When it comes to capping property taxes, Unshackle Upstate Executive Director Brian Sampson said exemptions aren't acceptable—even if it means not passing a cap at all.

While the Senate has passed Gov. Andrew Cuomo's program bill that would establish a hard 2 percent cap on property-tax levies—that is, with no exemptions for cost-drivers like pensions and health care—the Assembly has pushed back, hoping to come to a compromise including certain (as of yet unrevealed) exemptions.

Sampson, who heads the Rochester-based business coalition, said exemptions would ensure “that you're never going to deal with those cost-drivers.” A number of business groups, including the Westchester County Alliance and the Rochester Business Alliance, lobbied 35 Assembly Democrats on the issue in Albany today.

“A cap with exemptions guarantees that we don't deal with the cost-drivers, so if I'd have to say, I'd say no cap,” Sampson said when asked if he'd rather have a cap with exemptions or no cap.

Some county, local and school officials have spoken out against passing a cap before dealing with the issue of mandate relief, arguing that it could be devastating to their budgets if their required costs aren't eased.

Sampson, however, said putting the cap in place would force lawmakers to deal with mandate relief. His group put out [a nine-piece wish list last week](#)^[1], detailing steps they'd like to see taken to help ease costs.

“Our belief is that if you put the cap in place, and you limit the growth of government in school districts and the local level, now there's going to be that pressure to deal with those mandates,” Sampson said.

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[1] a nine-piece wish list last week:

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