

## What Counts as Wealthy?

Monday, July 12, 2010

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Dear Friend,

A new report has confirmed what we on Long Island have known all along: Long Island is one of the most expensive regions in New York State – and the country – to raise a family.

Commissioned by several anti-poverty groups, the report compared the average cost of basic needs for families across New York and determined how much it would cost for a family to live without government support – otherwise known as the self-sufficiency standard.

According to the study, the annual self-sufficiency standard in Suffolk County for a family of five is \$121,269. To put Long Island's high cost of living into perspective, if that same family moved to Laramie County, Wyoming, they would only need to earn less than half that amount - \$52,737 – to cover the same basic needs. Some outside our region might say that a family earning \$120,000 a year is wealthy. And, in other communities, it might be – but not in ours.

Last Tuesday, I joined the Health and Welfare Council of Long Island in urging the passage of the Tax Equity Act, legislation I introduced with other New York Representatives to reform the federal tax code to reflect regional differences in cost of living. It's clear that what counts as wealthy in Laramie County won't cut it on Long Island.

For more information about my work on the Tax Equity Act, please visit <http://israel.house.gov>.

Sincerely,

Steve Israel

Member of Congress

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