

Homeowners debate grant

Over the past 50 years we have created, through our own hard work and sound ethics, an enviable place in the world to live. There aren't that many. The world found out, and as per Economics 101, the high demand raised the prices of our homes.

Real estate has its ups and downs. This year many of us are above the \$1.2-million threshold of the homeowner's grant and will be penalized \$570 or \$770 depending on where we live. Next year, a correction in the market may drop us below the threshold. In the process, we will pay taxes on a fictitious value. Not fair! Yes, you can defer your taxes by taking out a loan with the government. But why should we be put through that process (especially aging seniors whose debt-free values would be compromised)? Selling our homes is not an option for many reasons which would require another letter to the editor.

The government's inability to use common sense, be fair, be ethical toward their taxpayers reminds me of a show I recently watched. Hunger Games. The solution is simple. Abolish the cap on the homeowners grant.
RODGER AIERS Burnaby

The ability for any homeowner to defer property tax upon reaching the magical age of 55 should be reviewed. If all of us of that age group were to exercise this, the financial burden on those of a more tender age would be horrendous. Certainly, any senior in difficulty due to the escalation of property values should be allowed to consider this idea of deferral. To allow such based on age alone is patently wrong and only enables the more astute to borrow money from government and use their freed-up capital to further their own investments. ALASTAIR JAMIESON Vancouver

Instead of expanding the homeowner grant to owners of even more expensive homes, the B.C. government should end this subsidy to people who can afford to buy homes. It should use the \$800 million the grant costs to build social housing for lowincome people.

That \$800 million would build about 4,000 units on city-owned land. In five years all the homeless people in Metro Vancouver could have a real home and taxpayers could reap savings from the health system, justice system and see an increase in productivity. I'd be willing to give up my homeowner grant for this.

JEAN SWANSON Vancouver