



# County seizes family home over tax bill that was never owed

*Michael Pung v. Isabella County*



## Tax Assessor, House-Nabber

December 5, 2025

Financial In 1994, Scott Pung won exemption from a school tax. He died in 2004. But years later, a local tax assessor contended that his widow, now also deceased, should have submitted new paperwork to retain the exemption.

Pacific Legal Foundation observes that according to state law, “the exemption continues as long as family members continue to live in the home.... Based on her misreading of the law, the tax assessor retroactively denied the exemption for several previous years.”

The estate’s administrator, Mike Pung, got nowhere

trying to explain things to the tax assessor. So he brought his case to the Michigan Tax Tribunal. The tribunal ruled in favor of the Pungs.

Didn’t matter. When Mike paid the property taxes for 2012, the assessor called it an underpayment, since payment for the tax that the Pungs did not owe had not been included.

Mike still refused to pay the school tax. So the county grabbed the home that it had assessed at \$200,000 and auctioned it for \$76,000 to recover the amount of that tax.

With PLF’s help, the Pungs ultimately received \$73,000 of this amount, less than half the home’s assessed value. Now PLF is [headed to the Supreme Court](#) to make the case for further compensation.

Chances are good. Two years ago, the Supreme Court affirmed in other PLF litigation that local governments “are not allowed to abuse the tax system to take more from families than is owed.”

Or not owed.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.