



95TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2007 and 2008

HB4788

by Rep. Greg Harris

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

35 ILCS 200/15-172

Amends the Property Tax Code. With respect to the Senior Citizens Assessment Freeze Homestead Exemption, increases the amount of the maximum income limitation from \$55,000 to \$60,000. Changes the definition of "household income" to include only the income of the applicant and his or her spouse, if the spouse resides in the residence (now, "household income" includes the income of all the members of the household).

LRB095 18079 BDD 44162 b

FISCAL NOTE ACT
MAY APPLY

HOUSING
AFFORDABILITY
IMPACT NOTE ACT
MAY APPLY

1 AN ACT concerning revenue.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The Property Tax Code is amended by changing
5 Section 15-172 as follows:

6 (35 ILCS 200/15-172)

7 Sec. 15-172. Senior Citizens Assessment Freeze Homestead
8 Exemption.

9 (a) This Section may be cited as the Senior Citizens
10 Assessment Freeze Homestead Exemption.

11 (b) As used in this Section:

12 "Applicant" means an individual who has filed an
13 application under this Section.

14 "Base amount" means the base year equalized assessed value
15 of the residence plus the first year's equalized assessed value
16 of any added improvements which increased the assessed value of
17 the residence after the base year.

18 "Base year" means the taxable year prior to the taxable
19 year for which the applicant first qualifies and applies for
20 the exemption provided that in the prior taxable year the
21 property was improved with a permanent structure that was
22 occupied as a residence by the applicant who was liable for
23 paying real property taxes on the property and who was either

1 (i) an owner of record of the property or had legal or
2 equitable interest in the property as evidenced by a written
3 instrument or (ii) had a legal or equitable interest as a
4 lessee in the parcel of property that was single family
5 residence. If in any subsequent taxable year for which the
6 applicant applies and qualifies for the exemption the equalized
7 assessed value of the residence is less than the equalized
8 assessed value in the existing base year (provided that such
9 equalized assessed value is not based on an assessed value that
10 results from a temporary irregularity in the property that
11 reduces the assessed value for one or more taxable years), then
12 that subsequent taxable year shall become the base year until a
13 new base year is established under the terms of this paragraph.
14 For taxable year 1999 only, the Chief County Assessment Officer
15 shall review (i) all taxable years for which the applicant
16 applied and qualified for the exemption and (ii) the existing
17 base year. The assessment officer shall select as the new base
18 year the year with the lowest equalized assessed value. An
19 equalized assessed value that is based on an assessed value
20 that results from a temporary irregularity in the property that
21 reduces the assessed value for one or more taxable years shall
22 not be considered the lowest equalized assessed value. The
23 selected year shall be the base year for taxable year 1999 and
24 thereafter until a new base year is established under the terms
25 of this paragraph.

26 "Chief County Assessment Officer" means the County

1 Assessor or Supervisor of Assessments of the county in which
2 the property is located.

3 "Equalized assessed value" means the assessed value as
4 equalized by the Illinois Department of Revenue.

5 "Household" means the applicant, the spouse of the
6 applicant, and all persons using the residence of the applicant
7 as their principal place of residence.

8 "Household income" means the combined income, ~~of the~~
9 ~~members of a household~~ for the calendar year preceding the
10 taxable year, for the applicant and his or her spouse if the
11 spouse has resided in the residence at any time during the
12 taxable year.

13 "Income" has the same meaning as provided in Section 3.07
14 of the Senior Citizens and Disabled Persons Property Tax Relief
15 and Pharmaceutical Assistance Act, except that, beginning in
16 assessment year 2001, "income" does not include veteran's
17 benefits.

18 "Internal Revenue Code of 1986" means the United States
19 Internal Revenue Code of 1986 or any successor law or laws
20 relating to federal income taxes in effect for the year
21 preceding the taxable year.

22 "Life care facility that qualifies as a cooperative" means
23 a facility as defined in Section 2 of the Life Care Facilities
24 Act.

25 "Maximum income limitation" means:

26 (1) \$35,000 prior to taxable year 1999;

- 1 (2) \$40,000 in taxable years 1999 through 2003;
2 (3) \$45,000 in taxable years 2004 through 2005;
3 (4) \$50,000 in taxable years 2006 and 2007; ~~and~~
4 (5) \$55,000 in taxable year 2008; ~~and thereafter.~~
5 (6) \$60,000 in taxable year 2009 and thereafter.

6 "Residence" means the principal dwelling place and
7 appurtenant structures used for residential purposes in this
8 State occupied on January 1 of the taxable year by a household
9 and so much of the surrounding land, constituting the parcel
10 upon which the dwelling place is situated, as is used for
11 residential purposes. If the Chief County Assessment Officer
12 has established a specific legal description for a portion of
13 property constituting the residence, then that portion of
14 property shall be deemed the residence for the purposes of this
15 Section.

16 "Taxable year" means the calendar year during which ad
17 valorem property taxes payable in the next succeeding year are
18 levied.

19 (c) Beginning in taxable year 1994, a senior citizens
20 assessment freeze homestead exemption is granted for real
21 property that is improved with a permanent structure that is
22 occupied as a residence by an applicant who (i) is 65 years of
23 age or older during the taxable year, (ii) has a household
24 income that does not exceed the maximum income limitation,
25 (iii) is liable for paying real property taxes on the property,
26 and (iv) is an owner of record of the property or has a legal or

1 equitable interest in the property as evidenced by a written
2 instrument. This homestead exemption shall also apply to a
3 leasehold interest in a parcel of property improved with a
4 permanent structure that is a single family residence that is
5 occupied as a residence by a person who (i) is 65 years of age
6 or older during the taxable year, (ii) has a household income
7 that does not exceed the maximum income limitation, (iii) has a
8 legal or equitable ownership interest in the property as
9 lessee, and (iv) is liable for the payment of real property
10 taxes on that property.

11 In counties of 3,000,000 or more inhabitants, the amount of
12 the exemption for all taxable years is the equalized assessed
13 value of the residence in the taxable year for which
14 application is made minus the base amount. In all other
15 counties, the amount of the exemption is as follows: (i)
16 through taxable year 2005 and for taxable year 2007 and
17 thereafter, the amount of this exemption shall be the equalized
18 assessed value of the residence in the taxable year for which
19 application is made minus the base amount; and (ii) for taxable
20 year 2006, the amount of the exemption is as follows:

21 (1) For an applicant who has a household income of
22 \$45,000 or less, the amount of the exemption is the
23 equalized assessed value of the residence in the taxable
24 year for which application is made minus the base amount.

25 (2) For an applicant who has a household income
26 exceeding \$45,000 but not exceeding \$46,250, the amount of

1 the exemption is (i) the equalized assessed value of the
2 residence in the taxable year for which application is made
3 minus the base amount (ii) multiplied by 0.8.

4 (3) For an applicant who has a household income
5 exceeding \$46,250 but not exceeding \$47,500, the amount of
6 the exemption is (i) the equalized assessed value of the
7 residence in the taxable year for which application is made
8 minus the base amount (ii) multiplied by 0.6.

9 (4) For an applicant who has a household income
10 exceeding \$47,500 but not exceeding \$48,750, the amount of
11 the exemption is (i) the equalized assessed value of the
12 residence in the taxable year for which application is made
13 minus the base amount (ii) multiplied by 0.4.

14 (5) For an applicant who has a household income
15 exceeding \$48,750 but not exceeding \$50,000, the amount of
16 the exemption is (i) the equalized assessed value of the
17 residence in the taxable year for which application is made
18 minus the base amount (ii) multiplied by 0.2.

19 When the applicant is a surviving spouse of an applicant
20 for a prior year for the same residence for which an exemption
21 under this Section has been granted, the base year and base
22 amount for that residence are the same as for the applicant for
23 the prior year.

24 Each year at the time the assessment books are certified to
25 the County Clerk, the Board of Review or Board of Appeals shall
26 give to the County Clerk a list of the assessed values of

1 improvements on each parcel qualifying for this exemption that
2 were added after the base year for this parcel and that
3 increased the assessed value of the property.

4 In the case of land improved with an apartment building
5 owned and operated as a cooperative or a building that is a
6 life care facility that qualifies as a cooperative, the maximum
7 reduction from the equalized assessed value of the property is
8 limited to the sum of the reductions calculated for each unit
9 occupied as a residence by a person or persons (i) 65 years of
10 age or older, (ii) with a household income that does not exceed
11 the maximum income limitation, (iii) who is liable, by contract
12 with the owner or owners of record, for paying real property
13 taxes on the property, and (iv) who is an owner of record of a
14 legal or equitable interest in the cooperative apartment
15 building, other than a leasehold interest. In the instance of a
16 cooperative where a homestead exemption has been granted under
17 this Section, the cooperative association or its management
18 firm shall credit the savings resulting from that exemption
19 only to the apportioned tax liability of the owner who
20 qualified for the exemption. Any person who willfully refuses
21 to credit that savings to an owner who qualifies for the
22 exemption is guilty of a Class B misdemeanor.

23 When a homestead exemption has been granted under this
24 Section and an applicant then becomes a resident of a facility
25 licensed under the Nursing Home Care Act, the exemption shall
26 be granted in subsequent years so long as the residence (i)

1 continues to be occupied by the qualified applicant's spouse or
2 (ii) if remaining unoccupied, is still owned by the qualified
3 applicant for the homestead exemption.

4 Beginning January 1, 1997, when an individual dies who
5 would have qualified for an exemption under this Section, and
6 the surviving spouse does not independently qualify for this
7 exemption because of age, the exemption under this Section
8 shall be granted to the surviving spouse for the taxable year
9 preceding and the taxable year of the death, provided that,
10 except for age, the surviving spouse meets all other
11 qualifications for the granting of this exemption for those
12 years.

13 When married persons maintain separate residences, the
14 exemption provided for in this Section may be claimed by only
15 one of such persons and for only one residence.

16 For taxable year 1994 only, in counties having less than
17 3,000,000 inhabitants, to receive the exemption, a person shall
18 submit an application by February 15, 1995 to the Chief County
19 Assessment Officer of the county in which the property is
20 located. In counties having 3,000,000 or more inhabitants, for
21 taxable year 1994 and all subsequent taxable years, to receive
22 the exemption, a person may submit an application to the Chief
23 County Assessment Officer of the county in which the property
24 is located during such period as may be specified by the Chief
25 County Assessment Officer. The Chief County Assessment Officer
26 in counties of 3,000,000 or more inhabitants shall annually

1 give notice of the application period by mail or by
2 publication. In counties having less than 3,000,000
3 inhabitants, beginning with taxable year 1995 and thereafter,
4 to receive the exemption, a person shall submit an application
5 by July 1 of each taxable year to the Chief County Assessment
6 Officer of the county in which the property is located. A
7 county may, by ordinance, establish a date for submission of
8 applications that is different than July 1. The applicant shall
9 submit with the application an affidavit of the applicant's
10 total household income, age, marital status (and if married the
11 name and address of the applicant's spouse, if known), and
12 principal dwelling place of members of the household on January
13 1 of the taxable year. The Department shall establish, by rule,
14 a method for verifying the accuracy of affidavits filed by
15 applicants under this Section, and the Chief County Assessment
16 Officer may conduct audits of any taxpayer claiming an
17 exemption under this Section to verify that the taxpayer is
18 eligible to receive the exemption. Each application shall
19 contain or be verified by a written declaration that it is made
20 under the penalties of perjury. A taxpayer's signing a
21 fraudulent application under this Act is perjury, as defined in
22 Section 32-2 of the Criminal Code of 1961. The applications
23 shall be clearly marked as applications for the Senior Citizens
24 Assessment Freeze Homestead Exemption and must contain a notice
25 that any taxpayer who receives the exemption is subject to an
26 audit by the Chief County Assessment Officer.

1 Notwithstanding any other provision to the contrary, in
2 counties having fewer than 3,000,000 inhabitants, if an
3 applicant fails to file the application required by this
4 Section in a timely manner and this failure to file is due to a
5 mental or physical condition sufficiently severe so as to
6 render the applicant incapable of filing the application in a
7 timely manner, the Chief County Assessment Officer may extend
8 the filing deadline for a period of 30 days after the applicant
9 regains the capability to file the application, but in no case
10 may the filing deadline be extended beyond 3 months of the
11 original filing deadline. In order to receive the extension
12 provided in this paragraph, the applicant shall provide the
13 Chief County Assessment Officer with a signed statement from
14 the applicant's physician stating the nature and extent of the
15 condition, that, in the physician's opinion, the condition was
16 so severe that it rendered the applicant incapable of filing
17 the application in a timely manner, and the date on which the
18 applicant regained the capability to file the application.

19 Beginning January 1, 1998, notwithstanding any other
20 provision to the contrary, in counties having fewer than
21 3,000,000 inhabitants, if an applicant fails to file the
22 application required by this Section in a timely manner and
23 this failure to file is due to a mental or physical condition
24 sufficiently severe so as to render the applicant incapable of
25 filing the application in a timely manner, the Chief County
26 Assessment Officer may extend the filing deadline for a period

1 of 3 months. In order to receive the extension provided in this
2 paragraph, the applicant shall provide the Chief County
3 Assessment Officer with a signed statement from the applicant's
4 physician stating the nature and extent of the condition, and
5 that, in the physician's opinion, the condition was so severe
6 that it rendered the applicant incapable of filing the
7 application in a timely manner.

8 In counties having less than 3,000,000 inhabitants, if an
9 applicant was denied an exemption in taxable year 1994 and the
10 denial occurred due to an error on the part of an assessment
11 official, or his or her agent or employee, then beginning in
12 taxable year 1997 the applicant's base year, for purposes of
13 determining the amount of the exemption, shall be 1993 rather
14 than 1994. In addition, in taxable year 1997, the applicant's
15 exemption shall also include an amount equal to (i) the amount
16 of any exemption denied to the applicant in taxable year 1995
17 as a result of using 1994, rather than 1993, as the base year,
18 (ii) the amount of any exemption denied to the applicant in
19 taxable year 1996 as a result of using 1994, rather than 1993,
20 as the base year, and (iii) the amount of the exemption
21 erroneously denied for taxable year 1994.

22 For purposes of this Section, a person who will be 65 years
23 of age during the current taxable year shall be eligible to
24 apply for the homestead exemption during that taxable year.
25 Application shall be made during the application period in
26 effect for the county of his or her residence.

1 The Chief County Assessment Officer may determine the
2 eligibility of a life care facility that qualifies as a
3 cooperative to receive the benefits provided by this Section by
4 use of an affidavit, application, visual inspection,
5 questionnaire, or other reasonable method in order to insure
6 that the tax savings resulting from the exemption are credited
7 by the management firm to the apportioned tax liability of each
8 qualifying resident. The Chief County Assessment Officer may
9 request reasonable proof that the management firm has so
10 credited that exemption.

11 Except as provided in this Section, all information
12 received by the chief county assessment officer or the
13 Department from applications filed under this Section, or from
14 any investigation conducted under the provisions of this
15 Section, shall be confidential, except for official purposes or
16 pursuant to official procedures for collection of any State or
17 local tax or enforcement of any civil or criminal penalty or
18 sanction imposed by this Act or by any statute or ordinance
19 imposing a State or local tax. Any person who divulges any such
20 information in any manner, except in accordance with a proper
21 judicial order, is guilty of a Class A misdemeanor.

22 Nothing contained in this Section shall prevent the
23 Director or chief county assessment officer from publishing or
24 making available reasonable statistics concerning the
25 operation of the exemption contained in this Section in which
26 the contents of claims are grouped into aggregates in such a

1 way that information contained in any individual claim shall
2 not be disclosed.

3 (d) Each Chief County Assessment Officer shall annually
4 publish a notice of availability of the exemption provided
5 under this Section. The notice shall be published at least 60
6 days but no more than 75 days prior to the date on which the
7 application must be submitted to the Chief County Assessment
8 Officer of the county in which the property is located. The
9 notice shall appear in a newspaper of general circulation in
10 the county.

11 Notwithstanding Sections 6 and 8 of the State Mandates Act,
12 no reimbursement by the State is required for the
13 implementation of any mandate created by this Section.

14 (Source: P.A. 94-794, eff. 5-22-06; 95-644, eff. 10-12-07.)