LRB096 15668 HLH 30904 b

96TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY

State of Illinois

2009 and 2010

HB4911

Introduced 1/15/2010, by Rep. Darlene J. Senger

SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

See Index

Amends the Property Tax Code. Provides that, for the purposes of certain exemptions, the term "income" does not include Social Security benefits. Increases the maximum reduction under the Senior Citizens Homestead Exemption from $4,000 to $7,000 for taxable year 2010 and indexes the reduction to the Consumer Price Index. Includes disabled persons within the provisions granting an assessment freeze homestead exemption to senior citizens and changes the title of the exemption to the Senior Citizens and Disabled Persons Assessment Freeze Homestead Exemption. Decreases the age limit to qualify for the exemption from 65 years of age to 55 years of age. Increases the maximum income limitation under the exemption. Requires the county clerk to abate the taxes levied by a school district on each parcel of qualified homestead property that is owned by a taxpayer who is 65 years of age or older and who had an annual household income of $35,000 or less for the previous taxable year. Provides that, if a person turns 70 years of age or older during the taxable year and he or she qualified for a Senior Citizens Assessment Freeze Homestead Exemption in the previous taxable year, then the person qualifying need not reapply for the exemption. Amends the School Code. Subject to appropriation, requires the State Board of Education to reimburse each school district for any revenue lost due to the property tax abatement. Amends the State Mandates Act to require implementation without reimbursement. Effective immediately.

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FISCAL NOTE ACT
MAY APPLY

HOUSING
AFFORDABILITY
IMPACT NOTE ACT
MAY APPLY

A BILL FOR

AN ACT concerning revenue.

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

Section 5. The Property Tax Code is amended by changing Sections 15-170, 15-172, 15-175, and 15-177 and by adding Section 18-179 as follows:

(35 ILCS 200/15-170)

(Text of Section before amendment by P.A. 96-339)

Sec. 15-170. Senior Citizens Homestead Exemption. An annual homestead exemption limited, except as described here with relation to cooperatives or life care facilities, to a maximum reduction set forth below from the property's value, as equalized or assessed by the Department, is granted for property that is occupied as a residence by a person 65 years of age or older who is liable for paying real estate taxes on the property and is an owner of record of the property or has a legal or equitable interest therein as evidenced by a written instrument, except for a leasehold interest, other than a leasehold interest of land on which a single family residence is located, which is occupied as a residence by a person 65 years or older who has an ownership interest therein, legal, equitable or as a lessee, and on which he or she is liable for the payment of property taxes. Before taxable year 2004, the maximum reduction shall be $2,500 in counties with 3,000,000 or more inhabitants and $2,000 in all other counties. For taxable years 2004 through 2005, the maximum reduction shall be $3,000 in all counties. For taxable years 2006 and 2007, the maximum reduction shall be $3,500 in all counties. For ~~and, for~~ taxable years 2008 and 2009 ~~thereafter~~, the maximum reduction is $4,000 in all counties. For taxable year 2010, the maximum reduction is $7,000 in all counties. For taxable years 2011 and thereafter, the maximum reduction is the maximum reduction for the prior taxable year increased by the annual rate of increase, for the previous calendar year, of the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers for all items, published by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics.

For land improved with an apartment building owned and operated as a cooperative, the maximum reduction from the value of the property, as equalized by the Department, shall be multiplied by the number of apartments or units occupied by a person 65 years of age or older who is liable, by contract with the owner or owners of record, for paying property taxes on the property and is an owner of record of a legal or equitable interest in the cooperative apartment building, other than a leasehold interest. For land improved with a life care facility, the maximum reduction from the value of the property, as equalized by the Department, shall be multiplied by the number of apartments or units occupied by persons 65 years of age or older, irrespective of any legal, equitable, or leasehold interest in the facility, who are liable, under a contract with the owner or owners of record of the facility, for paying property taxes on the property. In a cooperative or a life care facility where a homestead exemption has been granted, the cooperative association or the management firm of the cooperative or facility shall credit the savings resulting from that exemption only to the apportioned tax liability of the owner or resident who qualified for the exemption. Any person who willfully refuses to so credit the savings shall be guilty of a Class B misdemeanor. Under this Section and Sections 15-175, 15-176, and 15-177, "life care facility" means a facility, as defined in Section 2 of the Life Care Facilities Act, with which the applicant for the homestead exemption has a life care contract as defined in that Act.

When a homestead exemption has been granted under this Section and the person qualifying subsequently becomes a resident of a facility licensed under the Assisted Living and Shared Housing Act or the Nursing Home Care Act, the exemption shall continue so long as the residence continues to be occupied by the qualifying person's spouse if the spouse is 65 years of age or older, or if the residence remains unoccupied but is still owned by the person qualified for the homestead exemption.

A person who will be 65 years of age during the current assessment year shall be eligible to apply for the homestead exemption during that assessment year. Application shall be made during the application period in effect for the county of his residence.

Beginning with assessment year 2003, for taxes payable in 2004, property that is first occupied as a residence after January 1 of any assessment year by a person who is eligible for the senior citizens homestead exemption under this Section must be granted a pro-rata exemption for the assessment year. The amount of the pro-rata exemption is the exemption allowed in the county under this Section divided by 365 and multiplied by the number of days during the assessment year the property is occupied as a residence by a person eligible for the exemption under this Section. The chief county assessment officer must adopt reasonable procedures to establish eligibility for this pro-rata exemption.

The assessor or chief county assessment officer may determine the eligibility of a life care facility to receive the benefits provided by this Section, by affidavit, application, visual inspection, questionnaire or other reasonable methods in order to insure that the tax savings resulting from the exemption are credited by the management firm to the apportioned tax liability of each qualifying resident. The assessor may request reasonable proof that the management firm has so credited the exemption.

The chief county assessment officer of each county with less than 3,000,000 inhabitants shall provide to each person allowed a homestead exemption under this Section a form to designate any other person to receive a duplicate of any notice of delinquency in the payment of taxes assessed and levied under this Code on the property of the person receiving the exemption. The duplicate notice shall be in addition to the notice required to be provided to the person receiving the exemption, and shall be given in the manner required by this Code. The person filing the request for the duplicate notice shall pay a fee of $5 to cover administrative costs to the supervisor of assessments, who shall then file the executed designation with the county collector. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Code to the contrary, the filing of such an executed designation requires the county collector to provide duplicate notices as indicated by the designation. A designation may be rescinded by the person who executed such designation at any time, in the manner and form required by the chief county assessment officer.

The assessor or chief county assessment officer may determine the eligibility of residential property to receive the homestead exemption provided by this Section by application, visual inspection, questionnaire or other reasonable methods. The determination shall be made in accordance with guidelines established by the Department.

In counties with less than 3,000,000 inhabitants, the county board may by resolution provide that if a person has been granted a homestead exemption under this Section, the person qualifying need not reapply for the exemption.

In counties with less than 3,000,000 inhabitants, if the assessor or chief county assessment officer requires annual application for verification of eligibility for an exemption once granted under this Section, the application shall be mailed to the taxpayer.

The assessor or chief county assessment officer shall notify each person who qualifies for an exemption under this Section that the person may also qualify for deferral of real estate taxes under the Senior Citizens Real Estate Tax Deferral Act. The notice shall set forth the qualifications needed for deferral of real estate taxes, the address and telephone number of county collector, and a statement that applications for deferral of real estate taxes may be obtained from the county collector.

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

(Source: P.A. 95-644, eff. 10-12-07; 95-876, eff. 8-21-08; 96-355, eff. 1-1-10.)

(Text of Section after amendment by P.A. 96-339)

Sec. 15-170. Senior Citizens Homestead Exemption. An annual homestead exemption limited, except as described here with relation to cooperatives or life care facilities, to a maximum reduction set forth below from the property's value, as equalized or assessed by the Department, is granted for property that is occupied as a residence by a person 65 years of age or older who is liable for paying real estate taxes on the property and is an owner of record of the property or has a legal or equitable interest therein as evidenced by a written instrument, except for a leasehold interest, other than a leasehold interest of land on which a single family residence is located, which is occupied as a residence by a person 65 years or older who has an ownership interest therein, legal, equitable or as a lessee, and on which he or she is liable for the payment of property taxes. Before taxable year 2004, the maximum reduction shall be $2,500 in counties with 3,000,000 or more inhabitants and $2,000 in all other counties. For taxable years 2004 through 2005, the maximum reduction shall be $3,000 in all counties. For taxable years 2006 and 2007, the maximum reduction shall be $3,500 in all counties. For ~~and, for~~ taxable years 2008 and 2009 ~~thereafter~~, the maximum reduction is $4,000 in all counties. For taxable year 2010, the maximum reduction is $7,000 in all counties. For taxable years 2011 and thereafter, the maximum reduction is the maximum reduction for the prior taxable year increased by the annual rate of increase, for the previous calendar year, of the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers for all items, published by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics.

For land improved with an apartment building owned and operated as a cooperative, the maximum reduction from the value of the property, as equalized by the Department, shall be multiplied by the number of apartments or units occupied by a person 65 years of age or older who is liable, by contract with the owner or owners of record, for paying property taxes on the property and is an owner of record of a legal or equitable interest in the cooperative apartment building, other than a leasehold interest. For land improved with a life care facility, the maximum reduction from the value of the property, as equalized by the Department, shall be multiplied by the number of apartments or units occupied by persons 65 years of age or older, irrespective of any legal, equitable, or leasehold interest in the facility, who are liable, under a contract with the owner or owners of record of the facility, for paying property taxes on the property. In a cooperative or a life care facility where a homestead exemption has been granted, the cooperative association or the management firm of the cooperative or facility shall credit the savings resulting from that exemption only to the apportioned tax liability of the owner or resident who qualified for the exemption. Any person who willfully refuses to so credit the savings shall be guilty of a Class B misdemeanor. Under this Section and Sections 15-175, 15-176, and 15-177, "life care facility" means a facility, as defined in Section 2 of the Life Care Facilities Act, with which the applicant for the homestead exemption has a life care contract as defined in that Act.

When a homestead exemption has been granted under this Section and the person qualifying subsequently becomes a resident of a facility licensed under the Assisted Living and Shared Housing Act, ~~or~~ the Nursing Home Care Act, or the MR/DD Community Care Act, the exemption shall continue so long as the residence continues to be occupied by the qualifying person's spouse if the spouse is 65 years of age or older, or if the residence remains unoccupied but is still owned by the person qualified for the homestead exemption.

A person who will be 65 years of age during the current assessment year shall be eligible to apply for the homestead exemption during that assessment year. Application shall be made during the application period in effect for the county of his residence.

Beginning with assessment year 2003, for taxes payable in 2004, property that is first occupied as a residence after January 1 of any assessment year by a person who is eligible for the senior citizens homestead exemption under this Section must be granted a pro-rata exemption for the assessment year. The amount of the pro-rata exemption is the exemption allowed in the county under this Section divided by 365 and multiplied by the number of days during the assessment year the property is occupied as a residence by a person eligible for the exemption under this Section. The chief county assessment officer must adopt reasonable procedures to establish eligibility for this pro-rata exemption.

The assessor or chief county assessment officer may determine the eligibility of a life care facility to receive the benefits provided by this Section, by affidavit, application, visual inspection, questionnaire or other reasonable methods in order to insure that the tax savings resulting from the exemption are credited by the management firm to the apportioned tax liability of each qualifying resident. The assessor may request reasonable proof that the management firm has so credited the exemption.

The chief county assessment officer of each county with less than 3,000,000 inhabitants shall provide to each person allowed a homestead exemption under this Section a form to designate any other person to receive a duplicate of any notice of delinquency in the payment of taxes assessed and levied under this Code on the property of the person receiving the exemption. The duplicate notice shall be in addition to the notice required to be provided to the person receiving the exemption, and shall be given in the manner required by this Code. The person filing the request for the duplicate notice shall pay a fee of $5 to cover administrative costs to the supervisor of assessments, who shall then file the executed designation with the county collector. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Code to the contrary, the filing of such an executed designation requires the county collector to provide duplicate notices as indicated by the designation. A designation may be rescinded by the person who executed such designation at any time, in the manner and form required by the chief county assessment officer.

The assessor or chief county assessment officer may determine the eligibility of residential property to receive the homestead exemption provided by this Section by application, visual inspection, questionnaire or other reasonable methods. The determination shall be made in accordance with guidelines established by the Department.

In counties with less than 3,000,000 inhabitants, the county board may by resolution provide that if a person has been granted a homestead exemption under this Section, the person qualifying need not reapply for the exemption.

In counties with less than 3,000,000 inhabitants, if the assessor or chief county assessment officer requires annual application for verification of eligibility for an exemption once granted under this Section, the application shall be mailed to the taxpayer.

The assessor or chief county assessment officer shall notify each person who qualifies for an exemption under this Section that the person may also qualify for deferral of real estate taxes under the Senior Citizens Real Estate Tax Deferral Act. The notice shall set forth the qualifications needed for deferral of real estate taxes, the address and telephone number of county collector, and a statement that applications for deferral of real estate taxes may be obtained from the county collector.

Notwithstanding Sections 6 and 8 of the State Mandates Act, no reimbursement by the State is required for the

implementation of any mandate created by this Section.
(Source: P.A. 95-644, eff. 10-12-07; 95-876, eff. 8-21-08; 96-339, eff. 7-1-10; 96-355, eff. 1-1-10; revised 9-25-09.)

(35 ILCS 200/15-172)
(Text of Section before amendment by P.A. 96-339)
Sec. 15-172. Senior Citizens and Disabled Persons Assessment Freeze Homestead Exemption.
(a) This Section may be cited as the Senior Citizens and Disabled Persons Assessment Freeze Homestead Exemption.
(b) As used in this Section:
"Applicant" means an individual who has filed an application under this Section.
"Base amount" means the base year equalized assessed value of the residence plus the first year's equalized assessed value of any added improvements which increased the assessed value of the residence after the base year.
"Base year" means the taxable year prior to the taxable year for which the applicant first qualifies and applies for the exemption provided that in the prior taxable year the property was improved with a permanent structure that was occupied as a residence by the applicant who was liable for paying real property taxes on the property and who was either (i) an owner of record of the property or had legal or equitable interest in the property as evidenced by a written instrument or (ii) had a legal or equitable interest as a

lessee in the parcel of property that was single family residence. If in any subsequent taxable year for which the applicant applies and qualifies for the exemption the equalized assessed value of the residence is less than the equalized assessed value in the existing base year (provided that such equalized assessed value is not based on an assessed value that results from a temporary irregularity in the property that reduces the assessed value for one or more taxable years), then that subsequent taxable year shall become the base year until a new base year is established under the terms of this paragraph. For taxable year 1999 only, the Chief County Assessment Officer shall review (i) all taxable years for which the applicant applied and qualified for the exemption and (ii) the existing base year. The assessment officer shall select as the new base year the year with the lowest equalized assessed value. An equalized assessed value that is based on an assessed value that results from a temporary irregularity in the property that reduces the assessed value for one or more taxable years shall not be considered the lowest equalized assessed value. The selected year shall be the base year for taxable year 1999 and thereafter until a new base year is established under the terms of this paragraph.

"Chief County Assessment Officer" means the County Assessor or Supervisor of Assessments of the county in which the property is located.

"Disabled person" means a person unable to engage in any

<u>substantial gainful activity by reason of a medically determinable physical or mental impairment that (i) can be expected to result in death or (ii) has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months. Disabled persons applying for the exemption under this Section must submit proof of the disability in the manner prescribed by the chief county assessment officer. Proof that an applicant is eligible to receive disability benefits under the federal Social Security Act constitutes proof of disability for purposes of this Section. Issuance of an Illinois Disabled Person Identification Card to the applicant stating that the possessor is under a Class 2 disability, as defined in Section 4A of the Illinois Identification Card Act, constitutes proof that the person is a disabled person for purposes of this Section.</u>

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

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

"Household income" means the combined income of the members of a household for the calendar year preceding the taxable year.

"Income" has the same meaning as provided in Section 3.07 of the Senior Citizens and Disabled Persons Property Tax Relief and Pharmaceutical Assistance Act, except that, beginning in assessment year 2001, "income" does not include veteran's benefits and, beginning in assessment year 2010, "income" does not include Social Security benefits.

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

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

"Maximum income limitation" means:

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

(2) $40,000 in taxable years 1999 through 2003;

(3) $45,000 in taxable years 2004 through 2005;

(4) $50,000 in taxable years 2006 and 2007; and

(5) $55,000 in taxable year 2008 and 2009; ~~thereafter.~~

(6) $55,000 for applicants who have occupied the residence for less than 5 years and $75,000 for all other applicants in taxable year 2010; and

(7) in taxable year 2011 and thereafter:

(A) for applicants who have occupied the residence for 5 years, $75,000; and

(B) for applicants who have occupied the residence for less than or more than 5 years, an amount equal to the maximum income limitation for the immediately prior taxable year increased by the lesser of (i) 2% or

(ii) the percentage increase during the immediately prior taxable year in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers for all items published by the United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics.

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

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

(c) Beginning in (1) taxable year 1994 for~~, a~~ senior citizens and (2) taxable year 2010 for disabled persons, an assessment freeze homestead exemption is granted for real property that is improved with a permanent structure that is occupied as a residence by an applicant who (i) is 55 ~~65~~ years of age or older or is a disabled person during the taxable year, (ii) has a household income that does not exceed the maximum income limitation, (iii) is liable for paying real property taxes on the property, and (iv) is an owner of record of the property or has a legal or equitable interest in the property as evidenced by a written instrument. This homestead exemption shall also apply to a leasehold interest in a parcel of property improved with a permanent structure that is a single family residence that is occupied as a residence by a person who (i) is 55 ~~65~~ years of age or older or is a disabled person during the taxable year, (ii) has a household income that does not exceed the maximum income limitation, (iii) has a legal or equitable ownership interest in the property as lessee, and (iv) is liable for the payment of real property taxes on that property.

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

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

(2) For an applicant who has a household income

exceeding $45,000 but not exceeding $46,250, the amount of the exemption is (i) the equalized assessed value of the residence in the taxable year for which application is made minus the base amount (ii) multiplied by 0.8.

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

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

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

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

Each year at the time the assessment books are certified to the County Clerk, the Board of Review or Board of Appeals shall give to the County Clerk a list of the assessed values of improvements on each parcel qualifying for this exemption that were added after the base year for this parcel and that increased the assessed value of the property.

In the case of land improved with an apartment building owned and operated as a cooperative or a building that is a life care facility that qualifies as a cooperative, the maximum reduction from the equalized assessed value of the property is limited to the sum of the reductions calculated for each unit occupied as a residence by a person or persons (i) 55 ~~65~~ years of age or older or by a disabled person or persons, (ii) with a household income that does not exceed the maximum income limitation, (iii) who is liable, by contract with the owner or owners of record, for paying real property taxes on the property, and (iv) who is an owner of record of a legal or equitable interest in the cooperative apartment building, other than a leasehold interest. In the instance of a cooperative where a homestead exemption has been granted under this Section, the cooperative association or its management firm shall credit the savings resulting from that exemption only to the apportioned tax liability of the owner who qualified for the exemption. Any person who willfully refuses to credit that savings to an owner who qualifies for the exemption is guilty of a Class B misdemeanor.

When a homestead exemption has been granted under this Section and an applicant then becomes a resident of a facility licensed under the Assisted Living and Shared Housing Act or the Nursing Home Care Act, the exemption shall be granted in subsequent years so long as the residence (i) continues to be occupied by the qualified applicant's spouse or (ii) if remaining unoccupied, is still owned by the qualified applicant for the homestead exemption.

Beginning January 1, 1997 <u>for senior citizens and January 1, 2010 for disabled persons</u>, when an individual dies who would have qualified for an exemption under this Section, and the surviving spouse does not independently qualify for this exemption because of age <u>or nondisability</u>, the exemption under this Section shall be granted to the surviving spouse for the taxable year preceding and the taxable year of the death, provided that, except for age <u>or nondisability</u>, the surviving spouse meets all other qualifications for the granting of this exemption for those years.

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

For taxable year 1994 only, in counties having less than 3,000,000 inhabitants, to receive the exemption, a person shall submit an application by February 15, 1995 to the Chief County Assessment Officer of the county in which the property is located. In counties having 3,000,000 or more inhabitants, for taxable year 1994 and all subsequent taxable years, to receive the exemption, a person may submit an application to the Chief

County Assessment Officer of the county in which the property is located during such period as may be specified by the Chief County Assessment Officer. The Chief County Assessment Officer in counties of 3,000,000 or more inhabitants shall annually give notice of the application period by mail or by publication. In counties having less than 3,000,000 inhabitants, beginning with taxable year 1995 and thereafter, to receive the exemption, a person shall submit an application by July 1 of each taxable year to the Chief County Assessment Officer of the county in which the property is located. A county may, by ordinance, establish a date for submission of applications that is different than July 1. The applicant shall submit with the application an affidavit of the applicant's total household income, age, marital status (and if married the name and address of the applicant's spouse, if known), <u>disability (if applying for the exemption as a disabled person),</u> and principal dwelling place of members of the household on January 1 of the taxable year. The Department shall establish, by rule, a method for verifying the accuracy of affidavits filed by applicants under this Section, and the Chief County Assessment Officer may conduct audits of any taxpayer claiming an exemption under this Section to verify that the taxpayer is eligible to receive the exemption. Each application shall contain or be verified by a written declaration that it is made under the penalties of perjury. A taxpayer's signing a fraudulent application under this Act is perjury, as defined in Section 32-2 of the Criminal Code of 1961. The applications shall be clearly marked as applications for the Senior Citizens and Disabled Persons Assessment Freeze Homestead Exemption and must contain a notice that any taxpayer who receives the exemption is subject to an audit by the Chief County Assessment Officer.

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

Beginning January 1, 1998, notwithstanding any other provision to the contrary, in counties having fewer than

3,000,000 inhabitants, if an applicant fails to file the application required by this Section in a timely manner and this failure to file is due to a mental or physical condition sufficiently severe so as to render the applicant incapable of filing the application in a timely manner, the Chief County Assessment Officer may extend the filing deadline for a period of 3 months. In order to receive the extension provided in this paragraph, the applicant shall provide the Chief County Assessment Officer with a signed statement from the applicant's physician stating the nature and extent of the condition, and that, in the physician's opinion, the condition was so severe that it rendered the applicant incapable of filing the application in a timely manner.

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

For purposes of this Section, a person who will be <u>55</u> ~~65~~ years of age <u>or is a disabled person</u> during the current taxable year shall be eligible to apply for the homestead exemption during that taxable year. Application shall be made during the application period in effect for the county of his or her residence.

<u>If a person turns 70 years of age or older during the taxable year, and he or she qualified for an exemption under this Section in the previous taxable year, then the person qualifying need not reapply for the exemption.</u>

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

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

Nothing contained in this Section shall prevent the Director or chief county assessment officer from publishing or making available reasonable statistics concerning the operation of the exemption contained in this Section in which the contents of claims are grouped into aggregates in such a way that information contained in any individual claim shall not be disclosed.

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

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

(Source: P.A. 95-644, eff. 10-12-07; 96-355, eff. 1-1-10.)

(Text of Section after amendment by P.A. 96-339)

Sec. 15-172. Senior Citizens <u>and Disabled Persons</u> Assessment Freeze Homestead Exemption.

(a) This Section may be cited as the Senior Citizens <u>and Disabled Persons</u> Assessment Freeze Homestead Exemption.

(b) As used in this Section:

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

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

"Base year" means the taxable year prior to the taxable year for which the applicant first qualifies and applies for the exemption provided that in the prior taxable year the property was improved with a permanent structure that was occupied as a residence by the applicant who was liable for paying real property taxes on the property and who was either (i) an owner of record of the property or had legal or equitable interest in the property as evidenced by a written instrument or (ii) had a legal or equitable interest as a lessee in the parcel of property that was single family residence. If in any subsequent taxable year for which the applicant applies and qualifies for the exemption the equalized assessed value of the residence is less than the equalized assessed value in the existing base year (provided that such equalized assessed value is not based on an assessed value that results from a temporary irregularity in the property that reduces the assessed value for one or more taxable years), then that subsequent taxable year shall become the base year until a new base year is established under the terms of this paragraph. For taxable year 1999 only, the Chief County Assessment Officer shall review (i) all taxable years for which the applicant applied and qualified for the exemption and (ii) the existing base year. The assessment officer shall select as the new base year the year with the lowest equalized assessed value. An equalized assessed value that is based on an assessed value that results from a temporary irregularity in the property that reduces the assessed value for one or more taxable years shall not be considered the lowest equalized assessed value. The selected year shall be the base year for taxable year 1999 and thereafter until a new base year is established under the terms of this paragraph.

"Chief County Assessment Officer" means the County Assessor or Supervisor of Assessments of the county in which the property is located.

"Disabled person" means a person unable to engage in any substantial gainful activity by reason of a medically determinable physical or mental impairment that (i) can be expected to result in death or (ii) has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months. Disabled persons applying for the exemption under this

Section must submit proof of the disability in the manner prescribed by the chief county assessment officer. Proof that an applicant is eligible to receive disability benefits under the federal Social Security Act constitutes proof of disability for purposes of this Section. Issuance of an Illinois Disabled Person Identification Card to the applicant stating that the possessor is under a Class 2 disability, as defined in Section 4A of the Illinois Identification Card Act, constitutes proof that the person is a disabled person for purposes of this Section.

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

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

"Household income" means the combined income of the members of a household for the calendar year preceding the taxable year.

"Income" has the same meaning as provided in Section 3.07 of the Senior Citizens and Disabled Persons Property Tax Relief and Pharmaceutical Assistance Act, except that, beginning in assessment year 2001, "income" does not include veteran's benefits and, beginning in assessment year 2010, "income" does not include Social Security benefits.

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

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

"Maximum income limitation" means:

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

(2) $40,000 in taxable years 1999 through 2003;

(3) $45,000 in taxable years 2004 through 2005;

(4) $50,000 in taxable years 2006 and 2007; and

(5) $55,000 in taxable year 2008 and 2009; ~~thereafter.~~

(6) $55,000 for applicants who have occupied the residence for less than 5 years and $75,000 for all other applicants in taxable year 2010; and

(7) in taxable year 2011 and thereafter:

(A) for applicants who have occupied the residence for 5 years, $75,000; and

(B) for applicants who have occupied the residence for less than or more than 5 years, an amount equal to the maximum income limitation for the immediately prior taxable year increased by the lesser of (i) 2% or (ii) the percentage increase during the immediately prior taxable year in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers for all items published by the United States Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics.

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

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

(c) Beginning in (1) taxable year 1994 for~~, a~~ senior citizens and (2) taxable year 2010 for disabled persons, an assessment freeze homestead exemption is granted for real property that is improved with a permanent structure that is occupied as a residence by an applicant who (i) is 55 ~~65~~ years of age or older or is a disabled person during the taxable year, (ii) has a household income that does not exceed the maximum income limitation, (iii) is liable for paying real property taxes on the property, and (iv) is an owner of record of the property or has a legal or equitable interest in the property as evidenced by a written instrument. This homestead exemption shall also apply to a leasehold interest in a parcel of property improved with a permanent structure that is a single family residence that is occupied as a residence by a person who (i) is 55 ~~65~~ years of age or older or is a disabled person during the taxable year, (ii) has a household income that does not exceed the maximum income limitation, (iii) has a legal or equitable ownership interest in the property as lessee, and (iv) is liable for the payment of real property taxes on that property.

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

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

(2) For an applicant who has a household income exceeding $45,000 but not exceeding $46,250, the amount of the exemption is (i) the equalized assessed value of the residence in the taxable year for which application is made minus the base amount (ii) multiplied by 0.8.

(3) For an applicant who has a household income

exceeding $46,250 but not exceeding $47,500, the amount of the exemption is (i) the equalized assessed value of the residence in the taxable year for which application is made minus the base amount (ii) multiplied by 0.6.

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

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

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

Each year at the time the assessment books are certified to the County Clerk, the Board of Review or Board of Appeals shall give to the County Clerk a list of the assessed values of improvements on each parcel qualifying for this exemption that were added after the base year for this parcel and that increased the assessed value of the property.

In the case of land improved with an apartment building owned and operated as a cooperative or a building that is a life care facility that qualifies as a cooperative, the maximum reduction from the equalized assessed value of the property is limited to the sum of the reductions calculated for each unit occupied as a residence by a person or persons (i) <u>55</u> ~~65~~ years of age or older <u>or by a disabled person or persons</u>, (ii) with a household income that does not exceed the maximum income limitation, (iii) who is liable, by contract with the owner or owners of record, for paying real property taxes on the property, and (iv) who is an owner of record of a legal or equitable interest in the cooperative apartment building, other than a leasehold interest. In the instance of a cooperative where a homestead exemption has been granted under this Section, the cooperative association or its management firm shall credit the savings resulting from that exemption only to the apportioned tax liability of the owner who qualified for the exemption. Any person who willfully refuses to credit that savings to an owner who qualifies for the exemption is guilty of a Class B misdemeanor.

When a homestead exemption has been granted under this Section and an applicant then becomes a resident of a facility licensed under the Assisted Living and Shared Housing Act<u>,</u> ~~or~~ the Nursing Home Care Act<u>,</u> or the MR/DD Community Care Act, the exemption shall be granted in subsequent years so long as the residence (i) continues to be occupied by the qualified applicant's spouse or (ii) if remaining unoccupied, is still owned by the qualified applicant for the homestead exemption.

Beginning January 1, 1997 for senior citizens and January 1, 2010 for disabled persons, when an individual dies who would have qualified for an exemption under this Section, and the surviving spouse does not independently qualify for this exemption because of age or nondisability, the exemption under this Section shall be granted to the surviving spouse for the taxable year preceding and the taxable year of the death, provided that, except for age or nondisability, the surviving spouse meets all other qualifications for the granting of this exemption for those years.

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

For taxable year 1994 only, in counties having less than 3,000,000 inhabitants, to receive the exemption, a person shall submit an application by February 15, 1995 to the Chief County Assessment Officer of the county in which the property is located. In counties having 3,000,000 or more inhabitants, for taxable year 1994 and all subsequent taxable years, to receive the exemption, a person may submit an application to the Chief County Assessment Officer of the county in which the property is located during such period as may be specified by the Chief County Assessment Officer. The Chief County Assessment Officer in counties of 3,000,000 or more inhabitants shall annually give notice of the application period by mail or by publication. In counties having less than 3,000,000 inhabitants, beginning with taxable year 1995 and thereafter, to receive the exemption, a person shall submit an application by July 1 of each taxable year to the Chief County Assessment Officer of the county in which the property is located. A county may, by ordinance, establish a date for submission of applications that is different than July 1. The applicant shall submit with the application an affidavit of the applicant's total household income, age, marital status (and if married the name and address of the applicant's spouse, if known), <u>disability (if applying for the exemption as a disabled person),</u> and principal dwelling place of members of the household on January 1 of the taxable year. The Department shall establish, by rule, a method for verifying the accuracy of affidavits filed by applicants under this Section, and the Chief County Assessment Officer may conduct audits of any taxpayer claiming an exemption under this Section to verify that the taxpayer is eligible to receive the exemption. Each application shall contain or be verified by a written declaration that it is made under the penalties of perjury. A taxpayer's signing a fraudulent application under this Act is perjury, as defined in Section 32-2 of the Criminal Code of 1961. The applications shall be clearly marked as applications for the Senior Citizens <u>and Disabled Persons</u> Assessment Freeze Homestead Exemption and must contain a notice that any taxpayer who receives the exemption is subject to an audit by the Chief

County Assessment Officer.

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

Beginning January 1, 1998, notwithstanding any other provision to the contrary, in counties having fewer than 3,000,000 inhabitants, if an applicant fails to file the application required by this Section in a timely manner and this failure to file is due to a mental or physical condition sufficiently severe so as to render the applicant incapable of filing the application in a timely manner, the Chief County

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

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

For purposes of this Section, a person who will be 55 ~~65~~ years of age or is a disabled person during the current taxable year shall be eligible to apply for the homestead exemption during that taxable year. Application shall be made during the application period in effect for the county of his or her residence.

If a person turns 70 years of age or older during the taxable year, and he or she qualified for an exemption under this Section in the previous taxable year, then the person qualifying need not reapply for the exemption.

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

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

Nothing contained in this Section shall prevent the Director or chief county assessment officer from publishing or making available reasonable statistics concerning the operation of the exemption contained in this Section in which the contents of claims are grouped into aggregates in such a way that information contained in any individual claim shall not be disclosed.

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

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

(Source: P.A. 95-644, eff. 10-12-07; 96-339, eff. 7-1-10; 96-355, eff. 1-1-10; revised 9-25-09)

(35 ILCS 200/15-175)

Sec. 15-175. General homestead exemption. Except as provided in Sections 15-176 and 15-177, homestead property is entitled to an annual homestead exemption limited, except as described here with relation to cooperatives, to a reduction in the equalized assessed value of homestead property equal to the increase in equalized assessed value for the current assessment year above the equalized assessed value of the property for 1977, up to the maximum reduction set forth below. If however, the 1977 equalized assessed value upon which taxes were paid is subsequently determined by local assessing officials, the Property Tax Appeal Board, or a court to have been excessive, the equalized assessed value which should have been placed on the property for 1977 shall be used to determine the amount of the exemption.

Except as provided in Section 15-176, the maximum reduction before taxable year 2004 shall be $4,500 in counties with 3,000,000 or more inhabitants and $3,500 in all other counties. Except as provided in Sections 15-176 and 15-177, for taxable years 2004 through 2007, the maximum reduction shall be $5,000, for taxable year 2008, the maximum reduction is $5,500, and, for taxable years 2009 and thereafter, the maximum reduction is $6,000 in all counties. If a county has elected to subject itself to the provisions of Section 15-176 as provided in subsection (k) of that Section, then, for the first taxable year only after the provisions of Section 15-176 no longer apply, for owners who, for the taxable year, have not been granted a senior citizens assessment freeze homestead exemption under Section 15-172 or a long-time occupant homestead exemption under Section 15-177, there shall be an additional exemption of $5,000 for owners with a household income of $30,000 or less.

In counties with fewer than 3,000,000 inhabitants, if, based on the most recent assessment, the equalized assessed value of the homestead property for the current assessment year is greater than the equalized assessed value of the property for 1977, the owner of the property shall automatically receive the exemption granted under this Section in an amount equal to the increase over the 1977 assessment up to the maximum reduction set forth in this Section.

If in any assessment year beginning with the 2000 assessment year, homestead property has a pro-rata valuation under Section 9-180 resulting in an increase in the assessed valuation, a reduction in equalized assessed valuation equal to the increase in equalized assessed value of the property for the year of the pro-rata valuation above the equalized assessed value of the property for 1977 shall be applied to the property on a proportionate basis for the period the property qualified as homestead property during the assessment year. The maximum proportionate homestead exemption shall not exceed the maximum homestead exemption allowed in the county under this Section divided by 365 and multiplied by the number of days the property qualified as homestead property.

"Homestead property" under this Section includes residential property that is occupied by its owner or owners as his or their principal dwelling place, or that is a leasehold interest on which a single family residence is situated, which is occupied as a residence by a person who has an ownership interest therein, legal or equitable or as a lessee, and on which the person is liable for the payment of property taxes. For land improved with an apartment building owned and operated as a cooperative or a building which is a life care facility as defined in Section 15-170 and considered to be a cooperative under Section 15-170, the maximum reduction from the equalized assessed value shall be limited to the increase in the value above the equalized assessed value of the property for 1977, up to the maximum reduction set forth above, multiplied by the number of apartments or units occupied by a person or persons who is liable, by contract with the owner or owners of record, for paying property taxes on the property and is an owner of record of a legal or equitable interest in the cooperative apartment building, other than a leasehold interest. For purposes of this Section, the term "life care facility" has the meaning stated in Section 15-170.

"Household", as used in this Section, means the owner, the spouse of the owner, and all persons using the residence of the owner as their principal place of residence.

"Household income", as used in this Section, means the combined income of the members of a household for the calendar year preceding the taxable year.

"Income", as used in this Section, has the same meaning as provided in Section 3.07 of the Senior Citizens and Disabled

Persons Property Tax Relief and Pharmaceutical Assistance Act, except that "income" does not include veteran's benefits and, beginning in assessment year 2010, "income" does not include Social Security benefits.

In a cooperative where a homestead exemption has been granted, the cooperative association or its management firm shall credit the savings resulting from that exemption only to the apportioned tax liability of the owner who qualified for the exemption. Any person who willfully refuses to so credit the savings shall be guilty of a Class B misdemeanor.

Where married persons maintain and reside in separate residences qualifying as homestead property, each residence shall receive 50% of the total reduction in equalized assessed valuation provided by this Section.

In all counties, the assessor or chief county assessment officer may determine the eligibility of residential property to receive the homestead exemption and the amount of the exemption by application, visual inspection, questionnaire or other reasonable methods. The determination shall be made in accordance with guidelines established by the Department, provided that the taxpayer applying for an additional general exemption under this Section shall submit to the chief county assessment officer an application with an affidavit of the applicant's total household income, age, marital status (and, if married, the name and address of the applicant's spouse, if known), and principal dwelling place of members of the household on January 1 of the taxable year. The Department shall issue guidelines establishing a method for verifying the accuracy of the affidavits filed by applicants under this paragraph. The applications shall be clearly marked as applications for the Additional General Homestead Exemption.

In counties with fewer than 3,000,000 inhabitants, in the event of a sale of homestead property the homestead exemption shall remain in effect for the remainder of the assessment year of the sale. The assessor or chief county assessment officer may require the new owner of the property to apply for the homestead exemption for the following assessment year.

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

(Source: P.A. 95-644, eff. 10-12-07.)

(35 ILCS 200/15-177)

Sec. 15-177. The long-time occupant homestead exemption.

(a) If the county has elected, under Section 15-176, to be subject to the provisions of the alternative general homestead exemption, then, for taxable years 2007 and thereafter, regardless of whether the exemption under Section 15-176 applies, qualified homestead property is entitled to an annual homestead exemption equal to a reduction in the property's equalized assessed value calculated as provided in this Section.

(b) As used in this Section:

"Adjusted homestead value" means the lesser of the following values:

(1) The property's base homestead value increased by: (i) 10% for each taxable year after the base year through and including the current tax year for qualified taxpayers with a household income of more than $75,000 but not exceeding $100,000; or (ii) 7% for each taxable year after the base year through and including the current tax year for qualified taxpayers with a household income of $75,000 or less. The increase each year is an increase over the prior year; or

(2) The property's equalized assessed value for the current tax year minus the general homestead deduction.

"Base homestead value" means:

(1) if the property did not have an adjusted homestead value under Section 15-176 for the base year, then an amount equal to the equalized assessed value of the property for the base year prior to exemptions, minus the general homestead deduction, provided that the property's assessment was not based on a reduced assessed value resulting from a temporary irregularity in the property for that year; or

(2) if the property had an adjusted homestead value under Section 15-176 for the base year, then an amount equal to the adjusted homestead value of the property under

Section 15-176 for the base year.

"Base year" means the taxable year prior to the taxable year in which the taxpayer first qualifies for the exemption under this Section.

"Current taxable year" means the taxable year for which the exemption under this Section is being applied.

"Equalized assessed value" means the property's assessed value as equalized by the Department.

"Homestead" or "homestead property" means residential property that as of January 1 of the tax year is occupied by a qualified taxpayer as his or her principal dwelling place, or that is a leasehold interest on which a single family residence is situated, that is occupied as a residence by a qualified taxpayer who has a legal or equitable interest therein evidenced by a written instrument, as an owner or as a lessee, and on which the person is liable for the payment of property taxes. Residential units in an apartment building owned and operated as a cooperative, or as a life care facility, which are occupied by persons who hold a legal or equitable interest in the cooperative apartment building or life care facility as owners or lessees, and who are liable by contract for the payment of property taxes, are included within this definition of homestead property. A homestead includes the dwelling place, appurtenant structures, and so much of the surrounding land constituting the parcel on which the dwelling place is situated as is used for residential purposes. If the assessor has established a specific legal description for a portion of property constituting the homestead, then the homestead is limited to the property within that description.

"Household income" has the meaning set forth under Section 15-172 of this Code. Beginning in assessment year 2010, "household income" does not include Social Security benefits.

"General homestead deduction" means the amount of the general homestead exemption under Section 15-175.

"Life care facility" means a facility defined in Section 2 of the Life Care Facilities Act.

"Qualified homestead property" means homestead property owned by a qualified taxpayer.

"Qualified taxpayer" means any individual:

(1) who, for at least 10 continuous years as of January 1 of the taxable year, has occupied the same homestead property as a principal residence and domicile or who, for at least 5 continuous years as of January 1 of the taxable year, has occupied the same homestead property as a principal residence and domicile if that person received assistance in the acquisition of the property as part of a government or nonprofit housing program; and

(2) who has a household income of $100,000 or less.

(c) The base homestead value must remain constant, except that the assessor may revise it under any of the following circumstances:

(1) If the equalized assessed value of a homestead

property for the current tax year is less than the previous base homestead value for that property, then the current equalized assessed value (provided it is not based on a reduced assessed value resulting from a temporary irregularity in the property) becomes the base homestead value in subsequent tax years.

(2) For any year in which new buildings, structures, or other improvements are constructed on the homestead property that would increase its assessed value, the assessor shall adjust the base homestead value with due regard to the value added by the new improvements.

(d) The amount of the exemption under this Section is the greater of: (i) the equalized assessed value of the homestead property for the current tax year minus the adjusted homestead value; or (ii) the general homestead deduction.

(e) In the case of an apartment building owned and operated as a cooperative, or as a life care facility, that contains residential units that qualify as homestead property of a qualified taxpayer under this Section, the maximum cumulative exemption amount attributed to the entire building or facility shall not exceed the sum of the exemptions calculated for each unit that is a qualified homestead property. The cooperative association, management firm, or other person or entity that manages or controls the cooperative apartment building or life care facility shall credit the exemption attributable to each residential unit only to the apportioned tax liability of the qualified taxpayer as to that unit. Any person who willfully refuses to so credit the exemption is guilty of a Class B misdemeanor.

(f) When married persons maintain separate residences, the exemption provided under this Section may be claimed by only one such person and for only one residence. No person who receives an exemption under Section 15-172 of this Code may receive an exemption under this Section. No person who receives an exemption under this Section may receive an exemption under Section 15-175 or 15-176 of this Code.

(g) In the event of a sale or other transfer in ownership of the homestead property between spouses or between a parent and a child, the exemption under this Section remains in effect if the new owner has a household income of $100,000 or less.

(h) In the event of a sale or other transfer in ownership of the homestead property other than subsection (g) of this Section, the exemption under this Section shall remain in effect for the remainder of the tax year and be calculated using the same base homestead value in which the sale or transfer occurs.

(i) To receive the exemption, a person must submit an application to the county assessor during the period specified by the county assessor.

The county assessor shall annually give notice of the application period by mail or by publication.

The taxpayer must submit, with the application, an affidavit of the taxpayer's total household income, marital status (and if married the name and address of the applicant's spouse, if known), and principal dwelling place of members of the household on January 1 of the taxable year. The Department shall establish, by rule, a method for verifying the accuracy of affidavits filed by applicants under this Section, and the Chief County Assessment Officer may conduct audits of any taxpayer claiming an exemption under this Section to verify that the taxpayer is eligible to receive the exemption. Each application shall contain or be verified by a written declaration that it is made under the penalties of perjury. A taxpayer's signing a fraudulent application under this Act is perjury, as defined in Section 32-2 of the Criminal Code of 1961. The applications shall be clearly marked as applications for the Long-time Occupant Homestead Exemption and must contain a notice that any taxpayer who receives the exemption is subject to an audit by the Chief County Assessment Officer.

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

(Source: P.A. 95-644, eff. 10-12-07.)

(35 ILCS 200/18-179 new)

Sec. 18-179. Abatement of school district taxes for eligible senior citizens.

(a) The county clerk shall abate the taxes levied by a school district on each parcel of qualified homestead property that is owned by an eligible senior citizen.

(b) The county clerk shall establish a procedure for eligible senior citizens to apply for this abatement.

(c) As used in this Section:

"Eligible senior citizen" means a taxpayer who is 65 years of age or older and who had an annual household income of $35,000 or less for the previous taxable year.

"Qualified homestead property" means a parcel of real property that:

(1) is occupied by not more than 2 families; and

(2) is used as the principal residence by an eligible senior citizen.

"Annual household income" has the meaning set forth under Section 15-172.

Section 10. The School Code is amended by adding Section 2-3.155 as follows:

(105 ILCS 5/2-3.155 new)

Sec. 2-3.155. Tax abatement reimbursements. The Board shall, subject to appropriation, reimburse each school district for any revenue lost due to the property tax abatement under Section 18-179 of the Property Tax Code.

Section 90. The State Mandates Act is amended by adding

Section 8.34 as follows:

(30 ILCS 805/8.34 new)

Sec. 8.34. Exempt mandate. Notwithstanding Sections 6 and 8 of this Act, no reimbursement by the State is required for the implementation of any mandate created by this amendatory Act of the 96th General Assembly.

Section 95. No acceleration or delay. Where this Act makes changes in a statute that is represented in this Act by text that is not yet or no longer in effect (for example, a Section represented by multiple versions), the use of that text does not accelerate or delay the taking effect of (i) the changes made by this Act or (ii) provisions derived from any other Public Act.

Section 99. Effective date. This Act takes effect upon becoming law.

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30 ILCS 805/8.34 new