

**SB0438**



**97TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**State of Illinois**

**2011 and 2012**

**SB0438**

Introduced 2/8/2011, by Sen. John J. Cullerton

**SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:**

35 ILCS 200/15-172

Amends the Property Tax Code. Makes a technical change in a Section concerning the senior citizens assessment freeze homestead exemption.

LRB097 04215 HLH 44254 b

**A BILL FOR**

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 ~~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 members  
9 of a household for the calendar year preceding the taxable  
10 year.

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

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

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

23 "Maximum income limitation" means:

- 24 (1) \$35,000 prior to taxable year 1999;  
25 (2) \$40,000 in taxable years 1999 through 2003;  
26 (3) \$45,000 in taxable years 2004 through 2005;

1 (4) \$50,000 in taxable years 2006 and 2007; and

2 (5) \$55,000 in taxable year 2008 and thereafter.

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

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

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

1 permanent structure that is a single family residence that is  
2 occupied as a residence by a person who (i) is 65 years of age  
3 or older during the taxable year, (ii) has a household income  
4 that does not exceed the maximum income limitation, (iii) has a  
5 legal or equitable ownership interest in the property as  
6 lessee, and (iv) is liable for the payment of real property  
7 taxes on that property.

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

18 (1) For an applicant who has a household income of  
19 \$45,000 or less, the amount of the exemption is the  
20 equalized assessed value of the residence in the taxable  
21 year for which application is made minus the base amount.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



1 owned by the qualified applicant for the homestead exemption.

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

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

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

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

25 Notwithstanding any other provision to the contrary, in  
26 counties having fewer than 3,000,000 inhabitants, if an

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

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

1 Assessment Officer with a signed statement from the applicant's  
2 physician stating the nature and extent of the condition, and  
3 that, in the physician's opinion, the condition was so severe  
4 that it rendered the applicant incapable of filing the  
5 application in a timely manner.

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

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

25 The Chief County Assessment Officer may determine the  
26 eligibility of a life care facility that qualifies as a

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

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

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

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

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

12           (Source: P.A. 95-644, eff. 10-12-07; 96-339, eff. 7-1-10;  
13 96-355, eff. 1-1-10; 96-1000, eff. 7-2-10.)