

1 AN ACT concerning taxes.

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

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

6 (35 ILCS 200/15-172)

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

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

11 (b) As used in this Section:

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

14 "Base amount" means the base year equalized assessed  
15 value of the residence plus the first year's equalized  
16 assessed value of any added improvements which increased the  
17 assessed value of 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  
24 (i) an owner of record of the property or had legal or  
25 equitable interest in the property as evidenced by a written  
26 instrument or (ii) had a legal or equitable interest as a  
27 lessee in the parcel of property that was single family  
28 residence. If in any subsequent taxable year for which the  
29 applicant applies and qualifies for the exemption the  
30 equalized assessed value of the residence is less than the  
31 equalized assessed value in the existing base year (provided

1 that such equalized assessed value is not based on an  
2 assessed value that results from a temporary irregularity in  
3 the property that reduces the assessed value for one or more  
4 taxable years), then that subsequent taxable year shall  
5 become the base year until a new base year is established  
6 under the terms of this paragraph. For taxable year 1999  
7 only, the Chief County Assessment Officer shall review (i)  
8 all taxable years for which the applicant applied and  
9 qualified for the exemption and (ii) the existing base year.  
10 The assessment officer shall select as the new base year the  
11 year with the lowest equalized assessed value. An equalized  
12 assessed value that is based on an assessed value that  
13 results from a temporary irregularity in the property that  
14 reduces the assessed value for one or more taxable years  
15 shall not be considered the lowest equalized assessed value.  
16 The selected year shall be the base year for taxable year  
17 1999 and thereafter until a new base year is established  
18 under the terms of this paragraph.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

21 (c) Beginning in taxable year 1994, a senior citizens  
22 assessment freeze homestead exemption is granted for real  
23 property that is improved with a permanent structure that is  
24 occupied as a residence by an applicant who (i) is 65 years  
25 of age or older during the taxable year, (ii) has a household  
26 income of \$35,000 or less prior to taxable year 1999 or  
27 \$40,000 or less in taxable year 1999 and thereafter, (iii) is  
28 liable for paying real property taxes on the property, and  
29 (iv) is an owner of record of the property or has a legal or  
30 equitable interest in the property as evidenced by a written  
31 instrument. This homestead exemption shall also apply to a  
32 leasehold interest in a parcel of property improved with a  
33 permanent structure that is a single family residence that is  
34 occupied as a residence by a person who (i) is 65 years of

1 age or older during the taxable year, (ii) has a household  
2 income of \$35,000 or less prior to taxable year 1999 or  
3 \$40,000 or less in taxable year 1999 and thereafter, (iii)  
4 has a legal or equitable ownership interest in the property  
5 as lessee, and (iv) is liable for the payment of real  
6 property taxes on that property.

7 The amount of this exemption shall be the equalized  
8 assessed value of the residence in the taxable year for which  
9 application is made minus the base amount.

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

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

21 In the case of land improved with an apartment building  
22 owned and operated as a cooperative or a building that is a  
23 life care facility that qualifies as a cooperative, the  
24 maximum reduction from the equalized assessed value of the  
25 property is limited to the sum of the reductions calculated  
26 for each unit occupied as a residence by a person or persons  
27 65 years of age or older with a household income of \$35,000  
28 or less prior to taxable year 1999 or \$40,000 or less in  
29 taxable year 1999 and thereafter who is liable, by contract  
30 with the owner or owners of record, for paying real property  
31 taxes on the property and who is an owner of record of a  
32 legal or equitable interest in the cooperative apartment  
33 building, other than a leasehold interest. In the instance of  
34 a cooperative where a homestead exemption has been granted

1 under this Section, the cooperative association or its  
2 management firm must ~~shall~~ credit the savings resulting from  
3 that exemption only to the apportioned tax liability of the  
4 owner who qualified for the exemption. Any person who  
5 willfully refuses to credit that savings to an owner who  
6 qualifies for the exemption is guilty of a Class B  
7 misdemeanor.

8 When a homestead exemption has been granted under this  
9 Section and an applicant then becomes a resident of a  
10 facility licensed under the Nursing Home Care Act, the  
11 exemption must ~~shall~~ be granted in subsequent years so long  
12 as the residence (i) continues to be occupied by the  
13 qualified applicant's spouse or (ii) if remaining unoccupied,  
14 is still owned by the qualified applicant for the homestead  
15 exemption.

16 Beginning January 1, 1997, when an individual dies who  
17 would have qualified for an exemption under this Section, and  
18 the surviving spouse does not independently qualify for this  
19 exemption because of age, the exemption under this Section  
20 shall be granted to the surviving spouse for the taxable year  
21 preceding and the taxable year of the death, provided that,  
22 except for age, the surviving spouse meets all other  
23 qualifications for the granting of this exemption for those  
24 years.

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

28 For taxable year 1994 only, in counties having less than  
29 3,000,000 inhabitants, to receive the exemption, a person  
30 must ~~shall~~ submit an application by February 15, 1995 to the  
31 Chief County Assessment Officer of the county in which the  
32 property is located. In counties having 3,000,000 or more  
33 inhabitants, for taxable year 1994 and all subsequent taxable  
34 years, to receive the exemption, a person may submit an

1 application to the Chief County Assessment Officer of the  
2 county in which the property is located during such period as  
3 may be specified by the Chief County Assessment Officer. The  
4 Chief County Assessment Officer in counties of 3,000,000 or  
5 more inhabitants shall annually give notice of the  
6 application period by mail or by publication. In counties  
7 having less than 3,000,000 inhabitants, beginning with  
8 taxable year 1995 and thereafter, to receive the exemption, a  
9 person must ~~shall~~ submit an application by July 1 of each  
10 taxable year to the Chief County Assessment Officer of the  
11 county in which the property is located. A county may, by  
12 ordinance, establish a date for submission of applications  
13 that is different than July 1. The applicant must ~~shall~~  
14 submit with the application an affidavit of the applicant's  
15 total household income, age, marital status (and if married  
16 the name and address of the applicant's spouse, if known),  
17 and principal dwelling place of members of the household on  
18 January 1 of the taxable year. The Department shall  
19 establish, by rule, a method for verifying the accuracy of  
20 affidavits filed by applicants under this Section. The  
21 applications shall be clearly marked as applications for the  
22 Senior Citizens Assessment Freeze Homestead Exemption.

23 Notwithstanding any other provision to the contrary, in  
24 counties having fewer than 3,000,000 inhabitants, if an  
25 applicant fails to file the application required by this  
26 Section in a timely manner and this failure to file is due to  
27 a mental or physical condition sufficiently severe so as to  
28 render the applicant incapable of filing the application in a  
29 timely manner, the Chief County Assessment Officer may extend  
30 the filing deadline for a period of 30 days after the  
31 applicant regains the capability to file the application, but  
32 in no case may the filing deadline be extended beyond 3  
33 months of the original filing deadline. In order to receive  
34 the extension provided in this paragraph, the applicant must

1 shall provide the Chief County Assessment Officer with a  
2 signed statement from the applicant's physician stating the  
3 nature and extent of the condition, that, in the physician's  
4 opinion, the condition was so severe that it rendered the  
5 applicant incapable of filing the application in a timely  
6 manner, and the date on which the applicant regained the  
7 capability to file the application.

8 Beginning January 1, 1998, notwithstanding any other  
9 provision to the contrary, in counties having fewer than  
10 3,000,000 inhabitants, if an applicant fails to file the  
11 application required by this Section in a timely manner and  
12 this failure to file is due to a mental or physical condition  
13 sufficiently severe so as to render the applicant incapable  
14 of filing the application in a timely manner, the Chief  
15 County Assessment Officer may extend the filing deadline for  
16 a period of 3 months. In order to receive the extension  
17 provided in this paragraph, the applicant must shall provide  
18 the Chief County Assessment Officer with a signed statement  
19 from the applicant's physician stating the nature and extent  
20 of the condition, and that, in the physician's opinion, the  
21 condition was so severe that it rendered the applicant  
22 incapable of filing the application in a timely manner.

23 In counties having less than 3,000,000 inhabitants, if an  
24 applicant was denied an exemption in taxable year 1994 and  
25 the denial occurred due to an error on the part of an  
26 assessment official, or his or her agent or employee, then  
27 beginning in taxable year 1997 the applicant's base year, for  
28 purposes of determining the amount of the exemption, shall be  
29 1993 rather than 1994. In addition, in taxable year 1997, the  
30 applicant's exemption shall also include an amount equal to  
31 (i) the amount of any exemption denied to the applicant in  
32 taxable year 1995 as a result of using 1994, rather than  
33 1993, as the base year, (ii) the amount of any exemption  
34 denied to the applicant in taxable year 1996 as a result of

1 using 1994, rather than 1993, as the base year, and (iii) the  
2 amount of the exemption erroneously denied for taxable year  
3 1994.

4 For purposes of this Section, a person who will be 65  
5 years of age during the current taxable year shall be  
6 eligible to apply for the homestead exemption during that  
7 taxable year. Application shall be made during the  
8 application period in effect for the county of his or her  
9 residence.

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

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

32 Nothing contained in this Section shall prevent the  
33 Director or chief county assessment officer from publishing  
34 or making available reasonable statistics concerning the



1 operation of the exemption contained in this Section in which  
2 the contents of claims are grouped into aggregates in such a  
3 way that information contained in any individual claim shall  
4 not be disclosed.

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

13 (Source: P.A. 90-14, eff. 7-1-97; 90-204, eff. 7-25-97;  
14 90-523, eff. 11-13-97; 90-524, eff. 1-1-98; 90-531, eff.  
15 1-1-98; 90-655, eff. 7-30-98; 91-45, eff. 6-30-99; 91-56,  
16 eff. 6-30-99; 91-819, eff. 6-13-00.)