

1 AN ACT concerning senior citizens.

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, subject  
28 to adjustment, (iii) is liable for paying real property taxes  
29 on the property, and (iv) is an owner of record of the  
30 property or has a legal or equitable interest in the property  
31 as evidenced by a written instrument. This homestead  
32 exemption shall also apply to a leasehold interest in a  
33 parcel of property improved with a permanent structure that  
34 is a single family residence that is occupied as a residence

1 by a person who (i) is 65 years of age or older during the  
2 taxable year, (ii) has a household income of \$35,000 or less  
3 prior to taxable year 1999 or \$40,000 or less in taxable year  
4 1999 and thereafter, subject to adjustment, (iii) has a legal  
5 or equitable ownership interest in the property as lessee,  
6 and (iv) is liable for the payment of real property taxes on  
7 that property. Beginning in taxable year 2002, the household  
8 income limitation shall be adjusted annually by the  
9 Department of Revenue to reflect increases in the Consumer  
10 Price Index reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of  
11 the federal Department of Labor or its successor agency. If  
12 this Consumer Price Index ceases to be reported, then the  
13 Department of Revenue shall designate a comparable substitute  
14 index by rule.

15 The amount of this exemption shall be the equalized  
16 assessed value of the residence in the taxable year for which  
17 application is made minus the base amount.

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

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

29 In the case of land improved with an apartment building  
30 owned and operated as a cooperative or a building that is a  
31 life care facility that qualifies as a cooperative, the  
32 maximum reduction from the equalized assessed value of the  
33 property is limited to the sum of the reductions calculated  
34 for each unit occupied as a residence by a person or persons

1 65 years of age or older with a household income of \$35,000  
2 or less prior to taxable year 1999 or \$40,000 or less in  
3 taxable year 1999 and thereafter, subject to adjustment, who  
4 is liable, by contract with the owner or owners of record,  
5 for paying real property taxes on the property and who is an  
6 owner of record of a legal or equitable interest in the  
7 cooperative apartment building, other than a leasehold  
8 interest. Beginning in taxable year 2002, the household  
9 income limitation shall be adjusted annually by the  
10 Department of Revenue to reflect increases in the Consumer  
11 Price Index reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of  
12 the federal Department of Labor or its successor agency. If  
13 this Consumer Price Index ceases to be reported, then the  
14 Department of Revenue shall designate a comparable substitute  
15 index by rule. In the instance of a cooperative where a  
16 homestead exemption has been granted under this Section, the  
17 cooperative association or its management firm shall credit  
18 the savings resulting from that exemption only to the  
19 apportioned tax liability of the owner who qualified for the  
20 exemption. Any person who willfully refuses to credit that  
21 savings to an owner who qualifies for the exemption is guilty  
22 of a Class B misdemeanor.

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

30 Beginning January 1, 1997, when an individual dies who  
31 would have qualified for an exemption under this Section, and  
32 the surviving spouse does not independently qualify for this  
33 exemption because of age, the exemption under this Section  
34 shall be granted to the surviving spouse for the taxable year

1 preceding and the taxable year of the death, provided that,  
2 except for age, the surviving spouse meets all other  
3 qualifications for the granting of this exemption for those  
4 years.

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

8 For taxable year 1994 only, in counties having less than  
9 3,000,000 inhabitants, to receive the exemption, a person  
10 shall submit an application by February 15, 1995 to the Chief  
11 County Assessment Officer of the county in which the property  
12 is located. In counties having 3,000,000 or more  
13 inhabitants, for taxable year 1994 and all subsequent taxable  
14 years, to receive the exemption, a person may submit an  
15 application to the Chief County Assessment Officer of the  
16 county in which the property is located during such period as  
17 may be specified by the Chief County Assessment Officer. The  
18 Chief County Assessment Officer in counties of 3,000,000 or  
19 more inhabitants shall annually give notice of the  
20 application period by mail or by publication. In counties  
21 having less than 3,000,000 inhabitants, beginning with  
22 taxable year 1995 and thereafter, to receive the exemption, a  
23 person shall submit an application by July 1 of each taxable  
24 year to the Chief County Assessment Officer of the county in  
25 which the property is located. A county may, by ordinance,  
26 establish a date for submission of applications that is  
27 different than July 1. The applicant shall submit with the  
28 application an affidavit of the applicant's total household  
29 income, age, marital status (and if married the name and  
30 address of the applicant's spouse, if known), and principal  
31 dwelling place of members of the household on January 1 of  
32 the taxable year. The Department shall establish, by rule, a  
33 method for verifying the accuracy of affidavits filed by  
34 applicants under this Section. The applications shall be

1 clearly marked as applications for the Senior Citizens  
2 Assessment Freeze Homestead Exemption.

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

22 Beginning January 1, 1998, notwithstanding any other  
23 provision to the contrary, in counties having fewer than  
24 3,000,000 inhabitants, if an applicant fails to file the  
25 application required by this Section in a timely manner and  
26 this failure to file is due to a mental or physical condition  
27 sufficiently severe so as to render the applicant incapable  
28 of filing the application in a timely manner, the Chief  
29 County Assessment Officer may extend the filing deadline for  
30 a period of 3 months. In order to receive the extension  
31 provided in this paragraph, the applicant shall provide the  
32 Chief County Assessment Officer with a signed statement from  
33 the applicant's physician stating the nature and extent of  
34 the condition, and that, in the physician's opinion, the

1 condition was so severe that it rendered the applicant  
2 incapable of filing the application in a timely manner.

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

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

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

34 Except as provided in this Section, all information



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

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

19 (d) Each Chief County Assessment Officer shall annually  
20 publish a notice of availability of the exemption provided  
21 under this Section. The notice shall be published at least  
22 60 days but no more than 75 days prior to the date on which  
23 the application must be submitted to the Chief County  
24 Assessment Officer of the county in which the property is  
25 located. The notice shall appear in a newspaper of general  
26 circulation in the county.

27 (Source: P.A. 90-14, eff. 7-1-97; 90-204, eff. 7-25-97;  
28 90-523, eff. 11-13-97; 90-524, eff. 1-1-98; 90-531, eff.  
29 1-1-98; 90-655, eff. 7-30-98; 91-45, eff. 6-30-99; 91-56,  
30 eff. 6-30-99; 91-819, eff. 6-13-00.)

31 Section 90. The State Mandates Act is amended by adding  
32 Section 8.25 as follows:

1 (30 ILCS 805/8.25 new)

2 Sec. 8.25. Exempt mandate. Notwithstanding Sections 6  
3 and 8 of this Act, no reimbursement by the State is required  
4 for the implementation of any mandate created by this  
5 amendatory Act of the 92nd General Assembly.

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