

Committee Substitute for
Committee Substitute for House Bill No. 291

An act relating to homestead exemption; creating s. 196.075, F.S.; authorizing boards of county commissioners and municipal governing authorities to grant by ordinance an additional homestead exemption for persons 65 and older whose household income does not exceed a specified amount; defining the terms “household” and “household income”; providing requirements for the ordinances; providing an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

Section 1. Section 196.075, Florida Statutes, is created to read:

196.075 Additional homestead exemption for persons 65 and older.—

(1) As used in this section, the term:

(a) “Household” means a person or group of persons living together in a room or group of rooms as a housing unit, but the term does not include persons boarding in or renting a portion of the dwelling.

(b) “Household income” means the adjusted gross income, as defined in s. 62 of the United States Internal Revenue Code, of all members of a household.

(2) In accordance with s. 6(f), Art. VII of the State Constitution, the board of county commissioners of any county or the governing authority of any municipality may adopt an ordinance to allow an additional homestead exemption of up to \$25,000 for any person who has the legal or equitable title to real estate and maintains thereon the permanent residence of the owner, who has attained age 65, and whose household income does not exceed \$20,000.

(3) Beginning January 1, 2001, the \$20,000 income limitation shall be adjusted annually, on January 1, by the percentage change in the average cost-of-living index in the period January 1 through December 31 of the immediate prior year compared with the same period for the year prior to that. The index is the average of the monthly consumer-price-index figures for the stated 12-month period, relative to the United States as a whole, issued by the United States Department of Labor.

(4) An ordinance granting additional homestead exemption as authorized by this section must meet the following requirements:

(a) It must be adopted under the procedures for adoption of a nonemergency ordinance specified in chapter 125 by a board of county commissioners, or chapter 166 by a municipal governing authority.

(b) It must specify that the exemption applies only to taxes levied by the unit of government granting the exemption. Unless otherwise specified by

the county or municipality, this exemption will apply to all tax levies of the county or municipality granting the exemption, including dependent special districts and municipal service taxing units.

(c) It must specify the amount of the exemption, which may not exceed \$25,000. If the county or municipality specifies a different exemption amount for dependent special districts or municipal service taxing units the exemption amount must be uniform in all dependent special districts or municipal service taxing units within the county or municipality.

(d) It must require that a taxpayer claiming the exemption annually submit to the property appraiser, not later than March 1, a sworn statement of household income on a form prescribed by the Department of Revenue.

(5) The department must require by rule that the filing of the statement be supported by copies of any federal income tax returns for the prior year, any wage and earnings statements (W-2 forms), and any other documents it finds necessary, for each member of the household, to be submitted by June 1. The taxpayer's statement shall attest to the accuracy of such copies. The property appraiser may not grant the exemption without the required documentation.

(6) The board of county commissioners or municipal governing authority must deliver a copy of any ordinance adopted under this section to the property appraiser no later than December 1 of the year prior to the year the exemption will take effect. If the ordinance is repealed, the board of county commissioners or municipal governing authority shall notify the property appraiser no later than December 1 of the year prior to the year the exemption expires.

(7) Those persons entitled to the homestead exemption in s. 196.031 may apply for and receive an additional homestead exemption as provided in this section. Receipt of the additional homestead exemption provided for in this section shall be subject to the provisions of ss. 196.131 and 196.161, if applicable.

(8) If title is held jointly with right of survivorship, the person residing on the property and otherwise qualifying may receive the entire amount of the additional homestead exemption.

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 1999.

Approved by the Governor June 11, 1999.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 11, 1999.