

A joint resolution proposing an amendment to Section 6 of Article VII of the State Constitution, relating to homestead exemptions from ad valorem taxation, to provide a discount from the amount of ad valorem taxation levied on the homestead of a veteran who meets specified criteria.

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

That the following amendment to Section 6 of Article VII of the State Constitution is agreed to and shall be submitted to the electors of this state for approval or rejection at the next general election or at an earlier special election specifically authorized by law for that purpose:

ARTICLE VII
FINANCE AND TAXATION

SECTION 6. Homestead exemptions.—

(a) Every person who has the legal or equitable title to real estate and maintains thereon the permanent residence of the owner, or another legally or naturally dependent upon the owner, shall be exempt from taxation thereon, except assessments for special benefits, up to the assessed valuation of five thousand dollars, upon establishment of right thereto in the manner prescribed by law. The real estate may be held by legal or equitable title, by the entireties, jointly, in common, as a condominium, or indirectly by stock ownership or membership representing the owner's or member's proprietary interest in a corporation owning a fee or a leasehold initially in excess of ninety-eight years.

(b) Not more than one exemption shall be allowed any individual or family unit or with respect to any residential unit. No exemption shall exceed the value of the real estate assessable to the owner or, in case of ownership through stock or membership in a corporation, the value of the proportion which the interest in the corporation bears to the assessed value of the property.

(c) By general law and subject to conditions specified therein, the exemption shall be increased to a total of twenty-five thousand dollars of the assessed value of the real estate for each school district levy. By general law and subject to conditions specified therein, the exemption for all other levies may be increased up to an amount not exceeding ten thousand dollars of the assessed value of the real estate if the owner has attained age sixty-five or is totally and permanently disabled and if the owner is not entitled to the exemption provided in subsection (d).

(d) By general law and subject to conditions specified therein, the exemption shall be increased to a total of the following amounts of assessed value of real estate for each levy other than those of school districts: fifteen thousand dollars with respect to 1980 assessments; twenty thousand dollars with respect to 1981 assessments; twenty-five thousand dollars with respect to assessments for 1982 and each year thereafter. However, such increase shall

not apply with respect to any assessment roll until such roll is first determined to be in compliance with the provisions of section 4 by a state agency designated by general law. This subsection shall stand repealed on the effective date of any amendment to section 4 which provides for the assessment of homestead property at a specified percentage of its just value.

(e) By general law and subject to conditions specified therein, the Legislature may provide to renters, who are permanent residents, ad valorem tax relief on all ad valorem tax levies. Such ad valorem tax relief shall be in the form and amount established by general law.

(f) The legislature may, by general law, allow counties or municipalities, for the purpose of their respective tax levies and subject to the provisions of general law, to grant an additional homestead tax exemption not exceeding twenty-five thousand dollars to any person who has the legal or equitable title to real estate and maintains thereon the permanent residence of the owner and who has attained age sixty-five and whose household income, as defined by general law, does not exceed twenty thousand dollars. The general law must allow counties and municipalities to grant this additional exemption, within the limits prescribed in this subsection, by ordinance adopted in the manner prescribed by general law, and must provide for the periodic adjustment of the income limitation prescribed in this subsection for changes in the cost of living.

(g) Each veteran who is age 65 or older who is partially or totally permanently disabled shall receive a discount from the amount of the ad valorem tax otherwise owed on homestead property the veteran owns and resides in if the disability was combat related, the veteran was a resident of this state at the time of entering the military service of the United States, and the veteran was honorably discharged upon separation from military service. The discount shall be in a percentage equal to the percentage of the veteran's permanent, service-connected disability as determined by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. To qualify for the discount granted by this subsection, an applicant must submit to the county property appraiser, by March 1, proof of residency at the time of entering military service, an official letter from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs stating the percentage of the veteran's service-connected disability and such evidence that reasonably identifies the disability as combat related, and a copy of the veteran's honorable discharge. If the property appraiser denies the request for a discount, the appraiser must notify the applicant in writing of the reasons for the denial, and the veteran may reapply. The Legislature may, by general law, waive the annual application requirement in subsequent years. This subsection shall take effect December 7, 2006, is self-executing, and does not require implementing legislation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the following statement be placed on the ballot:

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

ARTICLE VII, SECTION 6

PERMANENTLY DISABLED VETERANS' DISCOUNT ON HOMESTEAD AD VALOREM TAX.—Proposing an amendment to the State Con-

stitution to provide a discount from the amount of ad valorem tax on the homestead of a partially or totally permanently disabled veteran who is age 65 or older who was a Florida resident at the time of entering military service, whose disability was combat-related, and who was honorably discharged; to specify the percentage of the discount as equal to the percentage of the veteran's permanent service-connected disability; to specify qualification requirements for the discount; to authorize the Legislature to waive the annual application requirement in subsequent years by general law; and to specify that the provision takes effect December 7, 2006, is self-executing, and does not require implementing legislation.

Filed in Office Secretary of State June 20, 2006.