

STATE OF NEW YORK

1543

2017-2018 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

January 12, 2017

Introduced by M. of A. ZEBROWSKI -- read once and referred to the Committee on Aging

AN ACT to amend the real property tax law, in relation to granting a total exemption from real property taxation for school tax purposes for certain persons seventy-five years of age or over

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

1 Section 1. The real property tax law is amended by adding a new
2 section 467-k to read as follows:

3 § 467-k. Persons seventy-five years of age or over. 1. Notwithstand-
4 ing any inconsistent provision of section four hundred sixty-seven of
5 this title or any other provision of law, real property owned by one or
6 more persons each of whom is seventy-five years of age or over, or real
7 property owned by husband and wife or siblings, one of whom is seventy-
8 five years of age or over and the youngest owner is at least sixty-five
9 years of age; such persons have resided in the school district for at
10 least thirty years and do not have any children enrolled in such school
11 district shall be exempt from taxation by any municipal corporation for
12 school purposes, in which located, to the total extent of the assessed
13 valuation thereof provided the governing board of such municipality,
14 after public hearing, adopts a local law, ordinance or resolution
15 providing therefor.

16 2. All of the provisions of section four hundred sixty-seven of this
17 title applicable to the granting of exemptions for general, county,
18 city, town, village, or school purposes insofar as such provisions are
19 not inconsistent with the provisions of this section shall be applicable
20 to the effectuating of the exemption provided in this section.

21 3. (a) To qualify for exemption pursuant to this section, the property
22 must be a one, two or three family residence, a farm dwelling or resi-
23 dential property held in condominium or cooperative form of ownership.
24 If the property is not an eligible type of property, but a portion of

EXPLANATION--Matter in italics (underscored) is new; matter in brackets
[-] is old law to be omitted.

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1 the property is partially used by the owner as a primary residence, that
2 portion which is so used shall be entitled to the exemption provided by
3 this section; provided that in no event shall the exemption exceed the
4 assessed value attributable to that portion.

5 (b) Primary residence. The property must serve as the primary resi-
6 dence of one or more of the owners thereof.

7 (c) Trusts. If legal title to the property is held by one or more
8 trustees, the beneficial owner or owners shall be deemed to own the
9 property for purposes of this subdivision.

10 (d) Farm dwellings not owned by the resident. (i) If legal title to
11 the farm dwelling is held by an S-corporation or by a C-corporation, the
12 exemption shall be granted if the property serves as the primary resi-
13 dence of a shareholder of such corporation.

14 (ii) If the legal title to the farm dwelling is held by a partnership,
15 the exemption shall be granted if the property serves as the primary
16 residence of one or more of the partners.

17 (iii) Any information deemed necessary to establish shareholder or
18 partner status for eligibility purposes shall be considered confidential
19 and exempt from the freedom of information law.

20 4. (a) The combined income of all of the owners, and of any owners'
21 spouses residing on the premises, may not exceed the applicable income
22 standard specified herein.

23 (i) For final assessment rolls to be completed prior to two thousand
24 seventeen, eligibility for the exemption shall be based upon income for
25 the income tax year immediately preceding the date of making application
26 for the exemption, and the income standard shall be sixty thousand
27 dollars.

28 (ii) For final assessment rolls to be completed in two thousand seven-
29 teen, eligibility for the exemption shall be based upon income for the
30 income tax year ending in two thousand fifteen, and the income standard
31 shall be the previously-applicable income standard of sixty thousand
32 dollars increased by the cost-of-living-adjustment percentage for two
33 thousand fifteen. For purposes of this computation, the cost-of-living-
34 adjustment percentage for two thousand fifteen shall be equal to the
35 "applicable increase percentage" used by the United States commissioner
36 of social security to determine monthly social security benefits payable
37 in two thousand fifteen to individuals, as provided by subsection (i) of
38 section four hundred fifteen of title forty-two of the United States
39 code.

40 (iii) For final assessment rolls to be completed in each ensuing year,
41 the applicable income tax year, cost-of-living-adjustment percentage and
42 applicable increase percentage shall all be advanced by one year, and
43 the income standard shall be the previously-applicable income standard
44 increased by the new cost-of-living-adjustment percentage. If there
45 should be a year for which there is no applicable increase percentage
46 due to a general benefit increase as defined by subdivision three of
47 subsection (i) of section four hundred fifteen of title forty-two of the
48 United States code, the applicable increase percentage for purposes of
49 this computation shall be deemed to be the percentage which would have
50 yielded that general benefit increase.

51 (iv) In no case shall an income standard be decreased from one assess-
52 ment roll to the next.

53 (v) If the income standard initially computed for an assessment roll
54 is not exactly equal to a multiple of fifty dollars, it shall be rounded
55 up to the next higher multiple of fifty dollars.

1 (vi) It shall be the responsibility of the commissioner to annually
2 determine all income standards pursuant to this subdivision beginning
3 with final assessment rolls to be completed in two thousand seventeen,
4 to cause notice thereof to be published in the state register, to
5 disseminate notice thereof to assessors, county directors of real prop-
6 erty tax services, and such other parties as it may deem appropriate,
7 and to post notice thereof on its website.

8 (b) The term "income" as used herein shall mean the "adjusted gross
9 income" for federal income tax purposes as reported on the applicant's
10 federal or state income tax return for the applicable income tax year,
11 subject to any subsequent amendments or revisions, reduced by distrib-
12 utions, to the extent included in federal adjusted gross income,
13 received from an individual retirement account and an individual retire-
14 ment annuity; provided that if no such return was filed for the applica-
15 ble income tax year, "income" shall mean the adjusted gross income that
16 would have been so reported if such a return had been filed.

17 (c) Any information or documentation submitted by the applicant in
18 connection with applications for or renewal of the exemption authorized
19 under this section to verify income, shall be deemed confidential, and
20 the assessor, any municipal officer or municipal employees are prohibit-
21 ed from disclosing any such information, except for any disclosure
22 necessary in the performance of their official duties, and except as
23 authorized by paragraph (e) of this subdivision. Any unauthorized
24 disclosure of such information shall be deemed a violation of section
25 eight hundred five-a of the general municipal law.

26 (d) Effective with applications for the enhanced exemption on final
27 assessment rolls to be completed in two thousand seventeen, the applica-
28 tion form shall indicate that the owners of the property and any owners'
29 spouses residing on the premises may authorize the assessor to have
30 their income eligibility verified annually thereafter by the state
31 department of taxation and finance, in lieu of furnishing copies of the
32 applicable income tax return or returns with the application. If the
33 owners of the property and any owners' spouses residing on the premises
34 elect to participate in this program, which shall be known as the STAR
35 income verification program, they must furnish their taxpayer identifi-
36 cation numbers in order to facilitate matching with records of the
37 department of taxation and finance. Thereafter, their income eligibility
38 shall be verified annually by the state department of taxation and
39 finance and the assessor shall not request income documentation from
40 them, unless such department advises the assessor through the commis-
41 sioner that they do not satisfy the applicable income eligibility
42 requirements, or that it is unable to determine whether they satisfy
43 those requirements.

44 (e) The assessor shall forward to the commissioner, in the time and
45 manner required by the commissioner, information identifying the persons
46 who have elected to participate in the STAR income verification program.
47 The commissioner shall forward such information to the department of
48 taxation and finance in the manner provided by the agreement executed
49 pursuant to section one hundred seventy-one-k of the tax law, and shall
50 notify the assessor of the response or responses he or she receives from
51 such department pursuant to such agreement. After receiving such
52 response or responses, the assessing authority shall cause notices to be
53 mailed to participants. Information obtained by the commissioner identi-
54 fying such persons, and responses obtained from such department shall be
55 confidential and shall not be subject to disclosure under article six of
56 the public officers law.

1 (f) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraphs (d) and (e) of this
2 subdivision, which establish a STAR income verification program, income
3 documentation must be submitted to the assessor in connection with each
4 of the following:

5 (i) Initial applications for the enhanced STAR exemption;

6 (ii) Renewal applications submitted by a person or persons who have
7 not elected to participate in the STAR income verification program;

8 (iii) Applications that would allow an enhanced exemption to resume
9 after having been discontinued;

10 (iv) Applications submitted by a person or persons who had previously
11 qualified for the enhanced exemption but not in the assessing unit in
12 question; and

13 (v) Applications with respect to which the department of taxation and
14 finance has advised the assessor through the commissioner that it is
15 unable to determine whether a participant or participants in the STAR
16 income verification program satisfy the income eligibility requirements.

17 § 2. This act shall take effect immediately and shall apply to assess-
18 ment rolls prepared on the basis of taxable status dates occurring on or
19 after the first of January next succeeding the date on which this act
20 shall have become a law.