
By: **Senators Klausmeier, Brochin, Garagiola, Hafer, Jacobs, and
Teitelbaum**

Introduced and read first time: January 31, 2006

Assigned to: Budget and Taxation

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Homeowners' Property Tax Credits - Senior Citizen Homeowners**

3 FOR the purpose of altering a certain homeowners' property tax credit to provide a
4 certain credit for certain senior citizens under certain circumstances; defining
5 certain terms; providing for the application of this Act; and generally relating to
6 a certain homeowners' property tax credit for senior citizen homeowners.

7 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
8 Article - Tax - Property
9 Section 9-104
10 Annotated Code of Maryland
11 (2001 Replacement Volume and 2005 Supplement)

12 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
13 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

14 **Article - Tax - Property**

15 9-104.

16 (a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

17 (2) (i) "Assets" include:
18 1. real property;
19 2. cash;
20 3. savings accounts;
21 4. stocks;
22 5. bonds; and
23 6. any other investment.

- 1 (ii) "Assets" do not include:
- 2 1. the dwelling for which a property tax credit is sought
- 3 under this section;
- 4 2. the cash value of the life insurance policies on the life of
- 5 the homeowner; or
- 6 3. tangible personal property.
- 7 (3) "Combined income" means the combined gross income of all
- 8 individuals who actually reside in a dwelling except an individual who:
- 9 (i) is a dependent of the homeowner under § 152 of the Internal
- 10 Revenue Code; or
- 11 (ii) pays a reasonable amount for rent or room and board.
- 12 (4) "Current market value" means:
- 13 (i) for residential property, the value as determined by the
- 14 Department; and
- 15 (ii) for farmland, marshland, and woodland, the value under Title
- 16 8, Subtitle 2 of this article as determined by the Department.
- 17 (5) "Disabled veteran" has the meaning stated in § 7-208(a) of this
- 18 article.
- 19 (6) "Dwelling" means:
- 20 (i) for a homeowner who is not a home purchaser, a house that is:
- 21 1. used as the principal residence of a homeowner and the lot
- 22 or curtilage on which the house is erected;
- 23 2. occupied by not more than 2 families; and
- 24 3. actually occupied or expected to be actually occupied by
- 25 the homeowner for more than 6 months of a 12-month period, which actual or
- 26 expected occupancy period shall include July 1 of the taxable year for which the
- 27 property tax credit under this section is sought; or
- 28 (ii) for a homeowner who is a home purchaser, a house that is:
- 29 1. used as the principal residence of a homeowner and the lot
- 30 or curtilage on which the house is erected;
- 31 2. occupied by not more than 2 families; and

1 (ii) the assessed value of the dwelling reduced by the amount of any
2 assessment on which a property tax credit is granted under § 9-105 of this subtitle.

3 (a-1) (1) The homeowners' tax credit under this section is a State-funded
4 program.

5 (2) It is the intent of the General Assembly that:

6 (i) the State shall appropriate sufficient funds to reimburse the
7 full amount of tax credits granted under this section; and

8 (ii) the State, and not the local governments, shall bear the burden
9 of any insufficiency of funds to fully reimburse the counties for property tax credits
10 under this section.

11 (3) For any fiscal year, if State appropriations for reimbursement of tax
12 credits under this section do not provide sufficient funds to fully reimburse the
13 counties for tax credits granted under this section, the Governor shall include in the
14 budget bill for the next fiscal year a deficiency appropriation to provide the additional
15 funds to fully reimburse the counties.

16 (b) The Department shall adopt regulations to carry out this section.

17 (c) (1) Except as provided in subsection (e) of this section, the Department is
18 responsible for the administrative duties that relate to the application and
19 determination of eligibility for a property tax credit under this section.

20 (2) The Department may:

21 (i) make an agreement with a county collector for limited
22 assistance with a part of the administrative duties; and

23 (ii) reimburse the county for the reasonable cost of the assistance
24 provided.

25 (3) When an applicant for the property tax credit under this section
26 resides in an independent living unit at a continuing care facility for the aged, the
27 Department shall determine for the independent living unit:

28 (i) the lot size;

29 (ii) the assessed value of land and building; and

30 (iii) the total real property tax.

31 (d) When an assessment notice is sent to a homeowner, the Department shall
32 give notice of the possible property tax credit under this section.

33 (e) (1) The Comptroller shall include, in each package of income tax forms
34 and instructions, notice of the availability of a property tax credit under this section.
35 Notice shall include any information needed to convey:

- 1 (i) eligibility;
- 2 (ii) filing deadlines;
- 3 (iii) applicable limitations; and
- 4 (iv) contact information for application forms.
- 5 (2) Notice in the package of income tax forms and instructions shall be:
- 6 (i) prominently placed;
- 7 (ii) printed in an open typeface, such as helvetica, no smaller than
- 8 10 points; and
- 9 (iii) positioned and colored to distinguish it from income tax
- 10 material.
- 11 (3) For income verification, the Comptroller shall:
- 12 (i) cooperate with the Department in adopting a procedure to audit
- 13 the application forms; and
- 14 (ii) notwithstanding § 13-202 of the Tax - General Article, supply
- 15 the Department with additional information.
- 16 (4) The Comptroller shall assist the Department in a postaudit of each
- 17 application.
- 18 (f) A homeowner who meets the requirements of this section shall be granted
- 19 the property tax credit under this section against the property tax imposed on the real
- 20 property of the dwelling.
- 21 (g) (1) Except as provided in subsection (g-1) of this section, the property
- 22 tax credit under this section is the total real property tax of a dwelling, less the
- 23 percentage of the combined income of the homeowner that is described in paragraph
- 24 (2) of this subsection.
- 25 (2) The percentage is:
- 26 (i) 0% of the 1st \$4,000 of combined income;
- 27 (ii) 1% of the 2nd \$4,000 of combined income;
- 28 (iii) 4.5% of the 3rd \$4,000 of combined income;
- 29 (iv) 6.5% of the 4th \$4,000 of combined income; and
- 30 (v) 9% of the combined income over \$16,000.

1 (g-1) For home purchasers, the property tax credit is the amount of the credit as
2 calculated under subsection (g) of this section multiplied by a fraction, where:

3 (1) the numerator of the fraction is the number of days in the fiscal year
4 that the home purchaser actually occupies or expects to actually occupy a dwelling in
5 which the home purchaser has a legal interest; and

6 (2) the denominator is 365 days.

7 (G-2) (1) IN THIS SUBSECTION, "TOTAL REAL PROPERTY TAX" MEANS THE
8 PRODUCT OF MULTIPLYING:

9 (I) THE SUM OF ALL PROPERTY TAX RATES ON REAL PROPERTY,
10 INCLUDING SPECIAL TAXING DISTRICT TAX RATES, IMPOSED ON A DWELLING; AND

11 (II) THE ASSESSED VALUE OF THE DWELLING REDUCED BY THE
12 AMOUNT OF ANY ASSESSMENT ON WHICH A PROPERTY TAX CREDIT IS GRANTED
13 UNDER § 9-105 OF THIS SUBTITLE.

14 (2) FOR A HOMEOWNER WHO MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS OF
15 PARAGRAPH (3) OF THIS SUBSECTION, THE PROPERTY TAX CREDIT UNDER THIS
16 SECTION IS THE GREATER OF:

17 (I) THE AMOUNT DETERMINED UNDER SUBSECTION (G) OF THIS
18 SECTION; AND

19 (II) THE AMOUNT BY WHICH THE TOTAL REAL PROPERTY TAX OF A
20 DWELLING FOR THE TAXABLE YEAR EXCEEDS THE TOTAL REAL PROPERTY TAX OF
21 THE DWELLING FOR THE FIRST TAXABLE YEAR IN WHICH:

22 1. THE HOMEOWNER OR THE HOMEOWNER'S SPOUSE WAS A
23 SENIOR CITIZEN; AND

24 2. THE HOMEOWNER'S DWELLING WAS NOT SUBJECT TO
25 ANY LIENS OR MORTGAGES.

26 (3) TO QUALIFY FOR THE PROPERTY TAX CREDIT UNDER THIS
27 SUBSECTION, A HOMEOWNER SHALL:

28 (I) BE A SENIOR CITIZEN OR BE MARRIED TO A SENIOR CITIZEN
29 AND FILE A JOINT MARYLAND INCOME TAX RETURN;

30 (II) HAVE A COMBINED INCOME THAT DOES NOT EXCEED \$70,000;
31 AND

32 (III) HAVE PAID OFF ANY LIENS OR MORTGAGES AGAINST THE
33 DWELLING.

34 (4) THE LIMITATION UNDER SUBSECTION (1)(1) OF THIS SECTION DOES
35 NOT APPLY TO A CREDIT GRANTED UNDER THIS SUBSECTION.

1 (h) If a surviving spouse of a homeowner has not remarried and meets the
2 qualifications except for age or disability, the property tax credit under this section is
3 available to the unmarried surviving spouse.

4 (i) (1) A property tax credit under this section may not be granted to a
5 homeowner whose combined net worth exceeds \$200,000 as of December 31 of the
6 calendar year that precedes the year in which the homeowner applies for the property
7 tax credit.

8 (2) If a property tax credit under this section is less than \$1 in any
9 taxable year, the credit may not be granted.

10 (3) A homeowner may claim a property tax credit under this section for
11 only 1 dwelling.

12 (4) Except as provided in subsection (s) of this section, if a property tax
13 credit is issued under this section, the credit or a voucher for a credit may be used
14 only in the taxable year in which it was issued or the next succeeding taxable year.
15 However, a homeowner whose dwelling is sold for taxes may receive the credit until
16 the final decree under § 14-844 of this article is entered.

17 (j) A homeowner may qualify for a property tax credit under this section if the
18 homeowner does not actually reside in the dwelling for the required time period
19 because of illness or need of special care even if the homeowner:

20 (1) rents the dwelling for less than 1 year; or

21 (2) rents the dwelling for more than 1 year to a member of the
22 homeowner's immediate family.

23 (k) (1) Except as provided in subsections (k-1) and (s) of this section, on or
24 before September 1 of the taxable year in which the property tax credit under this
25 section is sought, a homeowner may apply to the Department for a property tax credit
26 under this section. The application shall be made on the form that the Department
27 provides.

28 (2) (i) For good cause, the Department may accept an application after
29 September 1 but on or before October 31 of the taxable year.

30 (ii) The Department shall notify the homeowner in writing of its
31 acceptance or rejection of a late application.

32 (3) The homeowner shall state under oath that the facts in the
33 application are true.

34 (4) To substantiate the application, the applicant may be required to
35 provide a copy of an income tax return, or other evidence detailing gross income or net
36 worth.

1 (k-1) (1) A home purchaser may apply to the Department for a property tax
2 credit under this section after the execution of a contract of sale on the dwelling or
3 settlement on the dwelling by filing an application on the form that the Department
4 provides.

5 (2) The home purchaser shall state under oath that the facts in the
6 application are true.

7 (3) To substantiate the application, the Department may require the
8 applicant to provide a copy of an income tax return, or other evidence detailing gross
9 income or net worth.

10 (4) If the home purchaser files an application for a credit under this
11 section prior to settlement, the purchaser must file this application within 7 working
12 days after the execution of a contract of sale.

13 (5) Upon receipt of an application prior to settlement, the Department:

14 (i) may further require the applicant to provide a copy of the
15 executed sale agreement;

16 (ii) shall determine the amount, if any, of the credit for which the
17 home purchaser is eligible under this section; and

18 (iii) shall notify the home purchaser in writing of its decision within
19 5 working days from receipt of the application.

20 (6) The Department shall adopt regulations governing the application
21 for and granting of a credit before settlement as provided under this section.

22 (7) On certification by the Department, the Comptroller shall pay to the
23 home purchaser the property tax credit due under this section unless the credit was
24 used to adjust the home purchaser's final tax liability paid at settlement under
25 subsection (p) of this section.

26 (l) The Department shall notify an applicant in writing if the applicant is not
27 eligible for the property tax credit under this section.

28 (m) (1) For any eligible application received before the May 1 that precedes
29 the taxable year in which the property tax credit under this section is sought, the
30 Department shall request the appropriate county collector to prepare a tax bill that
31 reflects the final tax liability.

32 (2) If a homeowner presents the revised tax bill or a tax voucher with the
33 tax bill to the county collector, the homeowner may make a single payment for the
34 final tax liability.

35 (3) Except as provided in subsection (s) of this section, if a credit is
36 granted for an eligible application received after May 1, property tax is not due on the
37 property until 30 days after the revised tax bill is sent to the homeowner.

1 (4) If a municipal corporation or a special taxing district issues a tax bill
2 separate from the county tax bill, the county may require the homeowner to submit:

3 (i) the separate tax bill; or

4 (ii) proof of payment of the separate tax bill.

5 (n) If a municipal corporation or a special taxing district issues a tax bill to a
6 homeowner, the Department shall include the property tax rate of the municipal
7 corporation or the special taxing district in calculating the property tax credit under
8 this section and final tax liability.

9 (o) (1) Except for transfers between spouses, including a conveyance to a
10 surviving spouse from the personal representative of a deceased spouse, if a
11 homeowner transfers a dwelling that is subject to a property tax credit under this
12 section, the property tax credit ends on the date that the property is transferred. The
13 credit is not ended if the transfer is between spouses.

14 (2) The total amount of the property tax credit under this section is
15 included in determining the amount of property tax that is:

16 (i) paid by the homeowner; and

17 (ii) adjusted at the time of settlement between the homeowner and
18 the buyer.

19 (3) The homeowner is credited for the part of the property tax credit
20 under this section that the homeowner's period of ownership during the taxable year
21 in which the transfer occurs bears to the entire taxable year. The buyer shall pay the
22 remaining part of the property tax credit under this section to the county.

23 (4) Any property tax credit under this section that is collected by a
24 county from a buyer under this subsection shall be credited to the State less any cost
25 incurred by any county or a municipal corporation.

26 (p) The final tax liability of a home purchaser due at settlement shall be
27 adjusted to reflect any credit certified by the Department.

28 (q) (1) Each month or more frequently, if appropriate, each county collector
29 shall submit a request to the Department for reimbursement for an amount equal to
30 the property tax credits under this section and redeemed property tax credit vouchers
31 paid under this section.

32 (2) The request may not include the property tax credits for which the
33 county or municipal corporation is responsible under § 9-101(g) of this subtitle.

34 (3) Within 5 working days after receipt of the request the Department
35 shall certify to the Comptroller the amount of reimbursement due to each county.

36 (4) Within 5 working days:

1 (i) the Comptroller shall make the reimbursement to each county;
2 or

3 (ii) the appropriate county collector may withhold an amount of
4 State taxes sufficient to reimburse the county.

5 (r) (1) An eligible homeowner who has a continuing care contract for an
6 independent living unit at a continuing care facility for the aged shall receive
7 payment for the amount of the property tax credit under this section from the
8 Comptroller upon certification by the Department. A credit granted to the homeowner
9 under this subsection may not be assigned to the continuing care facility.

10 (2) (i) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (g) of this section,
11 if a homeowner under this subsection is a disabled veteran, the homeowner may
12 receive a credit for the total real property tax attributable to the independent living
13 unit, up to the maximum credit authorized under this section.

14 (ii) A disabled veteran may apply for the credit under this
15 subsection by providing the Department with the information required under
16 subsection (k) of this section and § 7-208(d) of this article.

17 (3) The surviving spouse of a disabled veteran may, upon application,
18 continue to receive the credit provided under this subsection until the surviving
19 spouse remarries.

20 (s) (1) Under the conditions set forth in this subsection, the Department
21 may accept an application from a homeowner within 3 years after April 15 of the
22 taxable year for which a credit is sought, if the homeowner:

23 (i) is at least 70 years old as of the taxable year for which a credit
24 is sought; and

25 (ii) was eligible for the credit under this section for the taxable year
26 for which the credit is sought.

27 (2) A homeowner may apply to the Department for a property tax credit
28 under this section by filing an application on the form that the Department provides.

29 (3) The homeowner shall state under oath that the facts in the
30 application are true.

31 (4) To substantiate the application, the Department may require the
32 homeowner to provide a copy of an income tax return, or other evidence detailing
33 gross income or net worth.

34 (5) On certification by the Department, the Comptroller shall pay to the
35 homeowner the property tax credit due under this section.

1 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect
2 June 1, 2006, and shall be applicable to all taxable years beginning after June 30,
3 2006.