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## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 669

Offered January 14, 2009

Prefiled January 12, 2009

*Proposing an amendment to Section 6 of Article X of the Constitution of Virginia, relating to property tax exemptions.*

Patrons—Janis and Cole

Referred to Committee on Privileges and Elections

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, a majority of the members elected to each house agreeing, That the following amendment to the Constitution of Virginia be, and the same hereby is, proposed and referred to the General Assembly at its first regular session held after the next general election of members of the House of Delegates for its concurrence in conformity with the provisions of Section 1 of Article XII of the Constitution of Virginia, namely:

Amend Section 6 of Article X of the Constitution of Virginia as follows:

## ARTICLE X

## TAXATION AND FINANCE

Section 6. Exempt property.

(a) Except as otherwise provided in this Constitution, the following property and no other shall be exempt from taxation, State and local, including inheritance taxes:

(1) Property owned directly or indirectly by the Commonwealth or any political subdivision thereof, and obligations of the Commonwealth or any political subdivision thereof exempt by law.

(2) Real estate and personal property owned and exclusively occupied or used by churches or religious bodies for religious worship or for the residences of their ministers.

(3) Private or public burying grounds or cemeteries, provided the same are not operated for profit.

(4) Property owned by public libraries or by institutions of learning not conducted for profit, so long as such property is primarily used for literary, scientific, or educational purposes or purposes incidental thereto. This provision may also apply to leasehold interests in such property as may be provided by general law.

(5) Intangible personal property, or any class or classes thereof, as may be exempted in whole or in part by general law.

(6) Property used by its owner for religious, charitable, patriotic, historical, benevolent, cultural, or public park and playground purposes, as may be provided by classification or designation by an ordinance adopted by the local governing body and subject to such restrictions and conditions as provided by general law.

(7) Land subject to a perpetual easement permitting inundation by water as may be exempted in whole or in part by general law.

(b) The General Assembly may by general law authorize the governing body of any county, city, town, or regional government to provide for the exemption from local property taxation, or a portion thereof, within such restrictions and upon such conditions as may be prescribed, of real estate and personal property designed for continuous habitation owned by, and occupied as the sole dwelling of, persons not less than sixty-five years of age or persons permanently and totally disabled as established by general law who are deemed by the General Assembly to be bearing an extraordinary tax burden on said property in relation to their income and financial worth.

*(b-1) The General Assembly may by general law authorize the governing body of any county, city, town, or regional government to provide for the exemption from local property taxation of the real property, including the joint real property of husband and wife, of any veteran who has been determined by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs or its successor agency pursuant to federal law to have a service-connected, permanent, and one hundred percent total disability, and who occupies the real property as his or her principal place of residence. The General Assembly may also provide this exemption from taxation for real property owned by the surviving spouse of a veteran who was eligible for the exemption provided in this section, so long as the surviving spouse does not remarry and continues to occupy the real property as his or her principal place of residence. An exemption provided by the General Assembly pursuant to this subsection shall not require a determination that the beneficiaries of the exemption are bearing an extraordinary tax burden on said property in relation to their income and financial worth.*

(c) Except as to property of the Commonwealth, the General Assembly by general law may restrict or condition, in whole or in part, but not extend, any or all of the above exemptions.

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59 (d) The General Assembly may define as a separate subject of taxation any property, including real  
60 or personal property, equipment, facilities, or devices, used primarily for the purpose of abating or  
61 preventing pollution of the atmosphere or waters of the Commonwealth or for the purpose of  
62 transferring or storing solar energy, and by general law may allow the governing body of any county,  
63 city, town, or regional government to exempt or partially exempt such property from taxation, or by  
64 general law may directly exempt or partially exempt such property from taxation.

65 (e) The General Assembly may define as a separate subject of taxation household goods, personal  
66 effects and tangible farm property and products, and by general law may allow the governing body of  
67 any county, city, town, or regional government to exempt or partially exempt such property from  
68 taxation, or by general law may directly exempt or partially exempt such property from taxation.

69 (f) Exemptions of property from taxation as established or authorized hereby shall be strictly  
70 construed; provided, however, that all property exempt from taxation on the effective date of this section  
71 shall continue to be exempt until otherwise provided by the General Assembly as herein set forth.

72 (g) The General Assembly may by general law authorize any county, city, town, or regional  
73 government to impose a service charge upon the owners of a class or classes of exempt property for  
74 services provided by such governments.

75 (h) The General Assembly may by general law authorize the governing body of any county, city,  
76 town, or regional government to provide for a partial exemption from local real property taxation, within  
77 such restrictions and upon such conditions as may be prescribed, (i) of real estate whose improvements,  
78 by virtue of age and use, have undergone substantial renovation, rehabilitation or replacement or (ii) of  
79 real estate with new structures and improvements in conservation, redevelopment, or rehabilitation areas.  
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81 (i) The General Assembly may by general law allow the governing body of any county, city, or  
82 town to exempt or partially exempt from taxation any generating equipment installed after December  
83 thirty-one, nineteen hundred seventy-four, for the purpose of converting from oil or natural gas to coal  
84 or to wood, wood bark, wood residue, or to any other alternate energy source for manufacturing, and  
85 any co-generation equipment installed since such date for use in manufacturing.

86 (j) The General Assembly may by general law allow the governing body of any county, city, or  
87 town to have the option to exempt or partially exempt from taxation any business, occupational or  
88 professional license or any merchants' capital, or both.