

# VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY -- 2014 SESSION

## CHAPTER 767

*An Act to amend and reenact §§ 58.1-3210, 58.1-3211.1, and 58.1-3212 of the Code of Virginia, relating to real property tax exemption for the elderly and disabled.*

[H 1000]

Approved April 7, 2014

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That §§ 58.1-3210, 58.1-3211.1, and 58.1-3212 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:**

**§ 58.1-3210. Exemption or deferral of taxes on property of certain elderly and handicapped persons.**

A. The governing body of any county, city or town may, by ordinance, provide for the exemption from, deferral of, or a combination program of exemptions from and deferrals of taxation of real estate and manufactured homes as defined in § 36-85.3, or any portion thereof, and upon such conditions and in such amount as the ordinance may prescribe. Such real estate shall be owned by, and be occupied as the sole dwelling of anyone at least 65 years of age or if provided in the ordinance, anyone found to be permanently and totally disabled as defined in § 58.1-3217. Such ordinance may provide for the exemption from or deferral of that portion of the tax which represents the increase in tax liability since the year such taxpayer reached the age of 65 or became disabled, or the year such ordinance became effective, whichever is later. A dwelling jointly held by a husband and wife, with no other joint owners, may qualify if either spouse is 65 or over or is permanently and totally disabled, and the proration of the exemption or deferral under § 58.1-3211.1 shall not apply for such dwelling.

B. *For purposes of this section, "eligible person" means a person who is at least age 65 or, if provided in the ordinance pursuant to subsection A, permanently and totally disabled. Under subsection A, real property owned and occupied as the sole dwelling of an eligible person includes real property (i) held by the eligible person alone or in conjunction with his spouse as tenant or tenants for life or joint lives, (ii) held in a revocable inter vivos trust over which the eligible person or the eligible person and his spouse hold the power of revocation, or (iii) held in an irrevocable trust under which an eligible person alone or in conjunction with his spouse possesses a life estate or an estate for joint lives or enjoys a continuing right of use or support. The term "eligible person" does not include any interest held under a leasehold or term of years.*

C. For purposes of this article, any reference to real estate shall include manufactured homes.

**§ 58.1-3211.1. Prorated tax exemption or deferral of tax.**

A. The governing body of the county, city, or town may, by ordinance, also provide for an exemption from or deferral of (or combination program thereof) real estate taxes for dwellings jointly held by two or more individuals not all of whom are at least age 65 or (if provided in the ordinance) permanently and totally disabled, provided that the dwelling is occupied as the sole dwelling by all such joint owners.

The tax exemption or deferral for the dwelling that otherwise would have been provided under the local ordinance shall be prorated by multiplying the amount of the exemption or deferral by a fraction that has as a numerator the percentage of ownership interest in the dwelling held by all such joint owners who are at least age 65 or (if provided in the ordinance) permanently and totally disabled, and as a denominator, 100%. As a condition of eligibility for such tax exemption or deferral, the joint owners of the dwelling shall be required to furnish to the relevant local officer sufficient evidence of each joint owner's ownership interest in the dwelling.

B. *For purposes of this subsection, "eligible person" means a person who is at least age 65 or, if provided in the ordinance pursuant to subsection A, permanently and totally disabled. For purposes of the tax exemption pursuant to subsection A, real property that is a dwelling jointly held by two or more individuals includes real property (i) held by an eligible person in conjunction with one or more other people as tenant or tenants for life or joint lives, (ii) held in a revocable inter vivos trust over which an eligible person with one or more other people hold the power of revocation, or (iii) held in an irrevocable trust under which an eligible person in conjunction with one or more other people possesses a life estate or an estate for joint lives or enjoys a continuing right of use or support. The term "eligible person" does not include any interest held under a leasehold or term of years.*

C. The provisions of this section shall not apply to dwellings jointly held by a husband and wife, with no other joint owners.

D. Nothing in this section shall be interpreted or construed to provide for an exemption from or deferral of tax for any dwelling jointly held by nonindividuals.

**§ 58.1-3212. Local restrictions and exemptions.**

Pursuant to Article X, Section 6 (b) of the Constitution of Virginia, the General Assembly hereby authorizes the governing body of a county, city or town to establish by ordinance net financial worth or annual income limitations as a condition of eligibility for any exemption or deferral of tax allowed pursuant to this article. If the governing body establishes an annual income limitation, the computation of annual income shall be based on adding together the income received during the preceding calendar year, without regard to whether a tax return is actually filed, by (i) owners of the dwelling who use it as their principal residence, (ii) owners' relatives who live in the dwelling, *except for those relatives living in the dwelling and providing bona fide caregiving services to the owner whether such relatives are compensated or not*, and (iii) at the option of each locality, nonrelatives of the owner who live in the dwelling except for bona fide tenants or bona fide caregivers of the owner, *whether compensated or not*. If the governing body establishes a net financial worth limitation, net financial worth shall be based on adding together the net financial worth, including the present value of equitable interests, as of December 31 of the immediately preceding calendar year, of the owners, and of the spouse of any owner, of the dwelling.

Nothing in this section shall be construed or interpreted as to preclude or prohibit the governing body of a county, city or town from excluding certain sources of income, or a portion of the same, for purposes of its annual income limitation or excluding certain assets, or a portion of the same, for purposes of its net financial worth limitation.

Any county, city, or town that pursuant to this article provides for the exemption from, deferral of, or a combination program of exemptions from and deferrals of real property taxes may exempt or defer the real property taxes of the qualifying dwelling and the land, not exceeding ten acres, upon which it is situated.

No local ordinance shall require that a citizen reside in the jurisdiction for a designated period of time as a condition for qualifying for any real estate tax exemption or deferral program established pursuant to § 58.1-3210.