



OHIO LEGISLATIVE SERVICE COMMISSION

Bill Analysis

Sam Benham

H.B. 513

132nd General Assembly
(As Reported by H. Ways & Means)

Reps. Brenner and Ginter, Arndt, Butler, Carfagna, Gonzales, Hill, Hughes, Leland, McClain, Perales, Riedel, Schaffer, Sprague, Stein, Rogers, Anielski, Hambley, Ramos, Retherford

BILL SUMMARY

- Grants a homestead exemption for the widow or widower of a peace officer, firefighter, or other emergency responder who dies in the line of duty or by an injury or illness sustained in the line of duty.
 - Exempts \$50,000 of the home's appraised value or cost from property taxation or the manufactured home tax.
 - Exempts such a widow or widower from the income means test, currently \$32,200 in Ohio adjusted gross income.
 - Reimburses local taxing units for the resulting reduction in taxes in the same manner as the existing homestead exemption.
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CONTENT AND OPERATION

Homestead exemption for surviving spouse of emergency responder

Continuing law provides a property tax credit for the residence, or "homestead" of certain qualifying individuals. This "homestead exemption" equals the taxes that would be charged on up to \$25,000 of the true value of a home owned by a qualified elderly or disabled homeowner. ("True value" is the appraised fair market value.) The credit essentially exempts \$25,000 of the value of a homestead from taxation. It also applies to manufactured and mobile homes regardless of whether they are taxed as real property or taxed under the manufactured home tax (except that manufactured and mobile homes are assessed at 40% of cost or market value and are depreciated). A special "enhanced" exemption of \$50,000 is available for homes of military veterans who

are totally disabled. The amount of the tax savings for a qualifying homestead depends on the local tax rate: the higher the tax rate, the greater the tax reduction. According to the Department of Taxation, the average annual tax savings is about \$435 for homeowners who are not disabled veterans.

The \$25,000 homestead exemption is available only to homeowners who are 65 years of age or older, permanently and totally disabled, or at least 59 years old and the surviving spouse of an individual who previously received the exemption. Homeowners who would first receive the exemption for tax year 2014 (or tax year 2015 for homeowners who pay the manufactured home tax) must have an Ohio adjusted gross income of \$32,200 or less, as computed for state income tax purposes. (This income limit is increased each year to adjust for inflation.) Homeowners who received the exemption before 2014 are not subject to the income limit, and no income limit applies to the \$50,000 exemption for disabled veterans.

The bill extends the homestead exemption to the surviving spouse of a "public service officer" who has either been killed in the line of duty or died from a fatal injury or illness sustained in the line of duty, including a heart attack. Similar to the homestead exemption for disabled veterans, the credit is equal the tax on \$50,000 of the true value of a homestead owned and occupied by that surviving spouse, and no income limit applies. For the purpose of the exemption, a public service officer is a paramedic, emergency medical technician (including EMT-basic, EMT-I, and "first responder" classes), a paid or volunteer firefighter, or a police officer, sheriff, deputy sheriff, or other class of peace officer as defined for the purposes of the law governing the authority to arrest or issue citations.¹ The exemption would continue until the surviving spouse dies or remarries, and, like the existing homestead exemption, it is portable among homes so long as it applies to only one home at a time. The exemption is not enhanced if the surviving spouse also qualifies for the exemption as an elderly or disabled individual or a disabled veteran.²

Application requirements

Before qualifying for the bill's exemption, a surviving spouse must apply to the county auditor and verify that the public service officer was killed in the line of duty by providing a letter confirming this from either a state pension fund or the department or

¹ R.C. Chapter 2935.

² R.C. 323.151, 323.152, 4503.064, and 4503.065.



agency that the public service officer served when the officer was killed in the line of duty.³

Reimbursement of local taxing units

As with the existing homestead exemption, local taxing units would be reimbursed by the state for the reduction in property tax revenue that results from the bill's extended exemption. The reimbursement would be paid from the state General Revenue Fund semiannually.⁴

Effective date

The new homestead exemption authorized by the bill begins to apply in tax year 2018 or, in the case of homes that are subject to the manufactured home tax, in tax year 2019. The difference in application is accounted for by the fact that the manufactured home tax is payable on a current-year basis, whereas the property tax is payable in arrears.⁵

HISTORY

ACTION	DATE
Introduced	02-20-18
Reported, H. Ways & Means	05-22-18

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³ R.C. 323.153 and 4503.066.

⁴ R.C. 323.156, not in the bill.

⁵ Section 3.

