
Senate Clears Bucco and Stanfield Bill Protecting Tax Benefits for Seniors

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The New Jersey Senate cleared legislation sponsored by Senator Anthony M. Bucco and Senator Jean Stanfield that provides a one-time income exemption for seniors to avoid losing tax benefits under the Senior Freeze program.



Legislation sponsored by Sen. Anthony Bucco and Sen. Jean Stanfield that would provide a one-time income exemption for seniors to avoid losing tax benefits under the Senior Freeze program was passed by the New Jersey Senate. (©iStock)

"The Senior Freeze program has provided substantial tax benefits that have helped many of our older and retired residents stay in their homes. Today's Senate vote approving this legislation would prevent seniors from being penalized for exceeding income limitations during one tax year," said Bucco (R-25). "By providing a one-time income exemption we can protect seniors from incurring massive property tax increases which could dispose them of their home. This bill is an important step towards protecting tax benefits for seniors in the State of New Jersey."

Under current law, the homestead property tax benefit, known as the Senior Freeze program, provides property tax relief to senior citizens with incomes under \$100,000.

When a senior qualifies for the program, they determine their base by considering their previous

year's property tax amount. If property taxes increase beyond their base in any subsequent year, the Senior Freeze program reimburses the claimant for the additional tax increases.

A senior could lose eligibility by earning too much income, which would result in their base being reset at a higher amount if they regain eligibility. This reset costs seniors thousands of dollars in annual tax benefits.

Senator Bucco and Senator Stanfield's bill, [S-3278](#) / [A-4674](#), would establish a one-time exemption that would protect senior's from losing their Senior Freeze tax base due to an increase in income. Under the bill, if a senior were to exceed the program's income limitation, they would be granted the one-time exemption and their base year would remain unchanged.

"When you have seniors that are living on fixed incomes, a drastic increase in property taxes is devastating for homeowners. The Senate's approval of this legislation means that seniors would not have to start at square one should they experience a temporary increase in income," said Stanfield (R-08). "The Senior Freeze program is intended to help seniors manage New Jersey's soaring property tax rates, which would be nearly impossible without this program. This one-time income exemption is a small, but impactful way to give seniors a break and protect crucial tax benefits that help them stay in their homes."