

The Florida Senate
BILL ANALYSIS AND FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Prepared By: The Professional Staff of the Committee on Community Affairs

BILL: CS/SB 750

INTRODUCER: Community Affairs Committee and Senators Simon and Gaetz

SUBJECT: Tax Exemptions for Surviving Spouses of Quadriplegics

DATE: March 26, 2025

REVISED: _____

	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR	REFERENCE	ACTION
1.	Shuler	Fleming	CA	Fav/CS
2.			FT	
3.			AP	

Please see Section IX. for Additional Information:

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE - Technical Changes

I. Summary:

CS/SB 750 is linked to SJR 748, which proposes an amendment to the Florida Constitution to permit the legislature to provide ad valorem tax relief to the surviving spouse of a quadriplegic who was receiving a property tax exemption on their homestead property at the time of their death.

The bill amends the associated statutory provision to provide that if a quadriplegic receiving an ad valorem tax exemption under current law predeceases his or her spouse, and the surviving spouse owns the same property thereafter, the exemption carries over to the surviving spouse. The surviving spouse may carry over the exemption to a new residence provided he or she does not remarry.

The Revenue Estimating Conference has not adopted an impact estimate for this bill.

The bill will take effect on the effective date of the constitutional amendment proposed by SJR 748 or a similar joint resolution having substantially the same intent and purpose. If approved by the electors in the next general election in November 2026, the proposed amendment and this bill will take effect on January 1, 2027.

II. Present Situation:

General Overview of Property Taxation

The ad valorem tax or “property tax” is an annual tax levied by counties, municipalities, school districts, and some special districts. The tax is based on the taxable value of a property as of January 1 of each year.¹ The property appraiser annually determines the “just value”² of property within the taxing authority and then applies relevant exclusions, assessment limitations, and exemptions to determine the property’s “taxable value.”³ The state constitution prohibits the state from levying ad valorem taxes⁴ and it limits the Legislature’s authority to provide for property valuations at less than just value, unless expressly authorized.⁵

Property Tax Exemptions for Homesteads

Statewide Homestead Exemption

Every person having legal or equitable title to real estate and who maintains a permanent residence on the real estate is deemed to establish homestead property. Homestead property is eligible for a \$25,000 tax exemption applicable to all ad valorem tax levies, including levies by school districts.⁶ An additional exemption applies to homestead property value between \$50,000 and \$75,000. This exemption is adjusted annually for inflation from the 2024 value of \$25,000 and does not apply to ad valorem taxes levied by school districts.⁷

Homestead Exemption for the Blind or Totally and Permanently Disabled

Article VII, s. 3(b) of the State Constitution, requires that general law establish an exemption of property tax for widows and widowers, and persons who are blind or totally and permanently disabled. Subsections (1) and (2) of s. 196.101, F.S., exempt the total value of a homestead used and owned by a person who has been certified⁸ as totally and permanently disabled, including any quadriplegic, paraplegic, or hemiplegic.

¹ Both real property and tangible personal property are subject to tax. Section 192.001(12), F.S., defines “real property” as land, buildings, fixtures, and all other improvements to land. Section 192.001(11)(d), F.S., defines “tangible personal property” as all goods, chattels, and other articles of value capable of manual possession and whose chief value is intrinsic to the article itself.

² Property must be valued at “just value” for purposes of property taxation, unless the Florida Constitution provides otherwise. FLA. CONST. Art VII, s. 4. Just value has been interpreted by the courts to mean the fair market value that a willing buyer would pay a willing seller for the property in an arm’s-length transaction. *See, e.g., Walter v. Schuler*, 176 So. 2d 81 (Fla. 1965); *Deltona Corp. v. Bailey*, 336 So. 2d 1163 (Fla. 1976); *S. Bell Tel. & Tel. Co. v. Dade Cnty.*, 275 So. 2d 4 (Fla. 1973).

³ *See* ss. 192.001(2) and (16), F.S.

⁴ FLA. CONST. art. VII, s. 1(a).

⁵ *See* FLA. CONST. art. VII, s. 4.

⁶ FLA. CONST. art. VII, s. 6(a).

⁷ *Id.* The percent change in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers, U.S. City Average, all items 1967=100 is used to adjust the exemption, if such percent change is positive. *Id.* For the 2025 tax year, the exemption amount is \$25,722. *See* Volusia County Property Appraiser, Homestead Exemption, <https://vcpa.vcgov.org/exemption/homestead> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

⁸ Section 196.101(3), F.S., permits the use of certification from two licensed Florida doctors or from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as proof of total and permanent disability.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

Section 1 amends section 196.101(1) to provide that if a quadriplegic granted a homestead exemption under this section predeceases his or her spouse, and the spouse holds title to the homestead property thereafter, the ad valorem tax exemption carries over to the benefit of the spouse until such time as he or she remarries or disposes of the property. The value of the exemption may be carried over by the spouse to new homestead property provided the surviving spouse does not remarry.

The section also makes a technical change to subsection (3).

Section 2 provides that the Department of Revenue may adopt emergency rules pursuant to s. 120.54(4), F.S., to administer the act.

Section 3 provides that this bill will take effect on the effective date of the constitutional amendment proposed by SJR 748, or a similar joint resolution having substantially the same specific intent and purpose.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

Article VII, s. 18(b) of the State Constitution provides that except upon the approval of each house of the Legislature by a two-thirds vote of the membership, the Legislature may not enact, amend, or repeal any general law if the anticipated effect of doing so would be to reduce the authority that municipalities or counties have to raise revenue in the aggregate, as such authority existed on February 1, 1989. The mandate requirement does not apply to laws having an insignificant impact,⁹ which for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 is forecast at approximately \$2.4 million.

The Revenue Estimating Conference has not yet adopted an impact for this bill. However, the Conference reviewed similar legislation (HB 165) and adopted a zero/negative indeterminate impact due to the requirement for a statewide referendum. However, the Conference determined that if the joint resolution (HJR 163) were to be approved by the voters, the provisions of HB 165 would have a negative recurring impact on school tax revenue of \$0.4 million and \$0.7 million on non-school local government tax revenue beginning in Fiscal Year 2025-2026.¹⁰ Therefore, the mandates provision likely does not apply.

⁹ FLA. CONST. art. VII, s. 18(d). An insignificant fiscal impact is the amount not greater than the average statewide population for the applicable fiscal year multiplied by \$0.10. See Fla. S. Comm. on Cmty. Affairs, *Interim Report 2012-115: Insignificant Impact*, (Sept. 2011), available at

<http://www.flsenate.gov/PublishedContent/Session/2012/InterimReports/2012-115ca.pdf> (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

¹⁰ OFF. OF ECON. & DEMOGRAPHIC RSCH, *Revenue Estimating Conference Impact Results: HB 165*, 9-11 (Feb. 7, 2025), available at https://edr.state.fl.us/Content/conferences/revenueimpact/archives/2025/_pdf/page9-11.pdf (last visited Mar. 20, 2025).

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

D. State Tax or Fee Increases:

Article VII, s. 19 of the Florida Constitution requires that legislation that increases or creates taxes or fees be passed by a 2/3 vote of each chamber in a bill with no other subject. The bill does not increase or create new taxes or fees. Thus, the constitutional requirements related to new or increased taxes or fees do not apply.

E. Other Constitutional Issues:

None identified.

V. Fiscal Impact Statement:**A. Tax/Fee Issues:**

The Revenue Estimating Conference has not yet adopted an impact for this bill. However, the Conference reviewed similar legislation (HB 165) and adopted a zero/negative indeterminate impact due to the requirement for a statewide referendum. The Conference estimated the potential recurring impact of HB 165 should the amendment pass to be \$1.1 million on local governments.¹¹

B. Private Sector Impact:

If the linked proposed constitutional amendment (SJR 748) is approved by 60 percent of voters in November 2026, additional households will be eligible for full homestead exemptions, where applicable. This will result in a positive fiscal impact as homeowners take advantage of ad valorem tax savings.

C. Government Sector Impact:

If the linked proposed constitutional amendment (SJR 748) is approved by 60 percent of voters in November 2026, additional households will be eligible for full homestead exemptions, where applicable. This will result in a negative fiscal impact on local governments as total assessments on homestead property will be reduced.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

¹¹ *Id.*

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Statutes Affected:

This bill substantially amends section 196.101 of the Florida Statutes.

IX. Additional Information:

- A. **Committee Substitute – Statement of Technical Changes:**
(Summarizing differences between the Committee Substitute and the prior version of the bill.)

CS by Community Affairs on March 25, 2025:

The committee substitute makes a technical change to replace the word “discount” with “exemption.”

- B. **Amendments:**

None.