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Local senior citizens could be paying less in property taxes if voters approve a referendum that would modify the homestead exemptions. The proposed change would increase existing senior homestead exemptions in the City of Dalton and unincorporated Whitfield County. Eight bills sponsored by the local delegation to the state legislature have been passed by the Georgia General Assembly that would make way for a referendum vote this November.

The referendum comes after extensive work by local elected officials and leaders, and the delegation to the state legislature. State Representatives Kasey Carpenter (R-Dalton), Steve Tarvin (R-Chickamauga), and Jason Ridley (R-Chatsworth) sponsored the bills to modify the homestead exemption and create additional exemptions for ad valorem taxes. Senator Chuck Payne (R-Dalton) helped the bills gain Senate consent and are now headed to Governor Brian Kemp's Office where they can be signed into law. Once that happens, voters can choose to enact or deny the homestead exemption changes on the November ballot.

"We are excited to partner with the City of Dalton and both school districts to offer this ballot initiative for a citizen vote in November," said Whitfield County Chairman Jevin Jensen. "Seniors struggling with record inflation and high property assessments will benefit from this new County tax exemption once approved."

"I'm proud that we've been able to work together with Whitfield County and our school systems to try to reduce the tax burden on our most vulnerable population," said Dalton City Councilmember Annalee Sams. "I'm also pleased that our residents will have the opportunity to vote directly on such an important change."

If voters approve the referendum this fall, here's what would change:

- Whitfield County homeowners 70 years of age or older may apply to be exempt from ad valorem taxes, levied for County purposes, in the amount of \$250,000.00 of the assessed property value.
- Whitfield County residents 65 years of age or older, and whose total household income does not exceed \$40,000.00, may be granted an exemption on that person's homestead from all Whitfield County ad valorem taxes for county purposes in the amount of \$150,000.00 of the assessed value of that homestead.
- For Whitfield County homeowners 70 years of age or older, increase the homestead exemption for Whitfield County School District's ad valorem taxes from \$150,000.00 to \$250,000.00 of the appraised value of that homestead.
- Whitfield County residents 65 years of age or older, and whose total income does not exceed \$40,000.00, may be granted an exemption on that person's homestead from all Whitfield County School District ad valorem taxes for educational purposes in the amount of \$150,000.00 of the assessed value of that homestead.
- For City of Dalton residents 65 years of age or older, and whose total income does not exceed \$40,000.00, increase the exemption on that person's homestead from all City of Dalton ad

- valorem taxes for municipal purposes from \$75,000.00 to \$150,000.00 of the assessed value of that homestead.
- For City of Dalton homeowners 70 years of age or older, increase the homestead exemption for City of Dalton ad valorem taxes for municipal purposes from \$150,000.00 to \$250,000.00 of the appraised value of that homestead.
- For City of Dalton residents 65 years of age or older, and whose total income does not exceed \$40,000.00, increase the exemption for City of Dalton Independent School District's ad valorem taxes on that person's homestead from \$75,000 to \$150,000.00 of the assessed value of that homestead.
- For City of Dalton homeowners 70 years of age or older, increase the homestead exemption for City of Dalton Independent School District's ad valorem taxes from \$150,000.00 to \$250,000.00 of the appraised value of that homestead.

For more information on the House Bills, please visit the Georgia's General Assembly website (www.legis.ga.gov) or contact your local leaders.