

HOUSE No. 4703

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Bradley H. Jones, Jr.

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act authorizing the town of Reading to establish a means-tested senior citizen property tax exemption.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:
<i>Bradley H. Jones, Jr.</i>	<i>20th Middlesex</i>
<i>Jason M. Lewis</i>	<i>Fifth Middlesex</i>
<i>James J. Dwyer</i>	<i>30th Middlesex</i>

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By Mr. Jones of North Reading, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 4703) of Bradley H. Jones, Jr., Jason M. Lewis and James J. Dwyer (by vote of the town) that the town of Reading be authorized to establish a means tested senior citizen property tax exemption. Revenue. [Local Approval Received.]

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Eighty-Ninth General Court
(2015-2016)**

An Act authorizing the town of Reading to establish a means-tested senior citizen property tax exemption.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. With respect to each qualifying parcel of real property classified as class
2 one, residential in the town of Reading there shall be an exemption from the property tax in an
3 amount to be set annually by the board of selectmen as provided in section 3. The exemption
4 shall be applied to the domicile of the taxpayer only. For the purposes of this act, “parcel” shall
5 be a unit of real property as defined by the board of assessors under the deed for the property and
6 shall include a condominium unit. The exemption provided for herein shall be in addition to any
7 and all other exemptions allowed by the General Laws.

8 SECTION 2. The board of assessors may deny an application if they find the applicant
9 has excessive assets that place them outside of the intended recipients of the senior exemption
10 created by this act. Real property shall qualify for the exemption under section 1 if all of the
11 following criteria are met:

12 (a) The qualifying real property is owned and occupied by a person whose prior
13 year's income would make the person eligible for the circuit breaker income tax credit under
14 section 6(k) of chapter 62 of the General Laws;

15 (b) The qualifying real property is owned by a single applicant age 65 or older at the
16 close of the previous year or jointly by persons either of whom is age 65 or above at the close of
17 the previous year and if the joint applicant is 60 years of age or older;

18 (c) The qualifying real property is owned and occupied by the applicant or joint
19 applicants as their domicile;

20 (d) The applicant or at least 1 of the joint applicants has been domiciled and owned a
21 home in the town of Reading for at least 10 consecutive years before filing an application for the
22 exemption;

23 (e) The maximum assessed value of the domicile is no greater than the prior year's
24 maximum assessed value for qualification for the circuit breaker income tax credit under Section
25 6(k) of chapter 62 of the General Laws as adjusted annually by the Department of Revenue; and

26 (f) The board of assessors has approved the application.

27 SECTION 3. The board of selectmen shall annually set the exemption amount provided
28 for in section 1, provided that the amount of the exemption shall be within a range of fifty per
29 cent to two hundred per cent of the amount of the circuit breaker income tax credit under section
30 6(k) of chapter 62 of the General Laws for which the applicant qualified in the previous year.

31 The total amount exempted by this act shall be allocated proportionally within the tax levy on all
32 residential taxpayers.

33 SECTION 4. A person who seeks to qualify for the exemption under section 1 shall,
34 before the deadline established by the board of assessors, file an application, on a form to be
35 adopted by the board of assessors, with the supporting documentation of the applicant's income
36 and assets as described in the application. The application shall be filed each year for which the
37 applicant seeks the exemption.

38 SECTION 5. No exemption shall be granted under this act until the Department of
39 Revenue certifies a residential tax rate for the applicable tax year where the total exemption
40 amount is raised by a burden shift within the residential tax levy.

41 SECTION 6. This act shall expire after 3 years of implementation of the exemption.