

The Senate Finance Committee offered the following substitute to SB 159:

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

To amend Part 1 of Article 2 of Chapter 5 of Title 48 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to tax exemptions, so as to change the date for filing applications for homestead exemptions; to provide for related matters; to provide an effective date; to repeal conflicting laws; and for other purposes.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF GEORGIA:

SECTION 1.

Part 1 of Article 2 of Chapter 5 of Title 48 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, relating to tax exemptions, is amended by revising Code Section 48-5-45, relating to application for homestead exemption, as follows:

"48-5-45.

(a)(1) An applicant seeking a homestead exemption as provided in Code Section 48-5-44 and qualifying under the provisions of Code Section 48-5-40 shall file a written application and schedule with the tax receiver or tax commissioner charged with the duty of receiving returns of property for taxation at any time during the calendar year subsequent to the property becoming the primary residence of the applicant up to and including ~~March 1 of the following year~~ the date for the closing of the books for the return of taxes for the calendar year.

(2) The failure to file properly the application and schedule on or before ~~March 1~~ the date for the closing of the books for the return of taxes of a calendar year in which the taxes are due shall constitute a waiver of the homestead exemption on the part of the applicant failing to make the application for such exemption for that year.

(b) The owner of a homestead which is actually occupied by the owner as a residence and homestead shall not have to apply for the exemption more than once so long as the owner remains in continuous occupation of the residence as a homestead. The exemption shall automatically be renewed from year to year so long as the owner continuously occupies the residence as a homestead.

1 (c) It is unlawful for any person, firm, or corporation to solicit, either directly or by mail
2 or advertisement, any other person for the purpose of filing on behalf of such other person
3 the application and schedule for homestead exemption required by this Code section if a
4 fee is charged for filing such application and schedule on behalf of such other person. A
5 violation of this subsection shall be a misdemeanor."

6 **SECTION 2.**

7 This Act shall become effective on July 1, 2008.

8 **SECTION 3.**

9 All laws and parts of laws in conflict with this Act are repealed.