

2016 -- S 2969

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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2016

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A N A C T

RELATING TO TAXATION - PROPERTY SUBJECT TO TAXATION - VETERANS'
EXEMPTIONS

Introduced By: Senators Lombardi, Felag, Gallo, and Miller

Date Introduced: May 10, 2016

Referred To: Senate Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 44-3-4 of the General Laws in Chapter 44-3 entitled "Property
2 Subject to Taxation" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **44-3-4. Veterans' exemptions.** -- (a) (1) The property of each person who served in the
4 military or naval service of the United States in the war of the rebellion, the Spanish-American
5 war, the insurrection in the Philippines, the China-relief expedition, or World War I, and the
6 property of each person who served in the military or naval service of the United States in World
7 War II at any time during the period beginning December 7, 1941, and ending on December 31,
8 1946, and the property of each person who served in the military or naval services of the United
9 States in the Korean conflict at any time during the period beginning June 27, 1950, and ending
10 January 31, 1955, or in the Vietnam conflict at any time during the period beginning February 28,
11 1961, and ending May 7, 1975, or who actually served in the Grenada or Lebanon conflicts of
12 1983-1984, or the Persian Gulf conflict, the Haitian conflict, the Somalian conflict, and the
13 Bosnian conflict, at any time during the period beginning August 2, 1990, and ending May 1,
14 1994, or in any conflict or undeclared war for which a campaign ribbon or expeditionary medal
15 was earned, and who was honorably discharged from the service, or who was discharged under
16 conditions other than dishonorable, or who, if not discharged, served honorably, or the property
17 of the unmarried widow or widower of that person, is exempted from taxation to the amount of
18 one thousand dollars (\$1,000), except in:

- 1 (i) Burrillville, where the exemption is four thousand dollars (\$4,000);
- 2 (ii) Cumberland, where the town council may, by ordinance, provide for an exemption of
- 3 a maximum of twenty-three thousand seven hundred seventy-two dollars (\$23,772);
- 4 (iii) Cranston, where the exemption shall not exceed three thousand dollars (\$3,000);
- 5 (iv) Jamestown, where the town council may, by ordinance, provide for an exemption
- 6 not exceeding five thousand dollars (\$5,000);
- 7 (v) Lincoln, where the exemption shall not exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000); and
- 8 where the town council may also provide for a real estate tax exemption not exceeding ten
- 9 thousand dollars (\$10,000) for those honorably discharged active duty veterans who served in
- 10 Operation Desert Storm.
- 11 (vi) Newport, where the exemption is four thousand dollars (\$4,000);
- 12 (vii) New Shoreham, where the town council may, by ordinance, provide for an
- 13 exemption of a maximum of thirty-six thousand four hundred fifty dollars (\$36,450);
- 14 (viii) North Kingstown, where the exemption is ten thousand dollars (\$10,000);
- 15 (ix) North Providence, where the town council may, by ordinance, provide for an
- 16 exemption of a maximum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000);
- 17 (x) [As amended by P.L. 2015, ch. 168, § 1] Smithfield, where the exemption is ten
- 18 thousand dollars (\$10,000);
- 19 (x) [As amended by P.L. 2015, ch. 179, § 1] Smithfield, where the exemption is four
- 20 thousand dollars (\$4,000). Provided, effective July 1, 2016, the Smithfield town council may, by
- 21 ordinance, provide for an exemption of a maximum of ten thousand dollars (\$10,000);
- 22 (xi) Warren, where the exemption shall not exceed five thousand five hundred dollars
- 23 (\$5,500) on motor vehicles, or nine thousand five hundred eighty-four dollars (\$9,584) on real
- 24 property.
- 25 (xii) Westerly, where the town council may, by ordinance, provide an exemption of the
- 26 total value of the veterans' real and personal property to a maximum of forty thousand five
- 27 hundred dollars (\$40,500);
- 28 (xiii) Barrington, where the town council may, by ordinance, provide for an exemption
- 29 of six thousand dollars (\$6,000) for real property;
- 30 (xiv) Exeter, where the exemption is five thousand dollars (\$5,000);
- 31 (xv) Gloucester, where the exemption shall not exceed thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000).
- 32 (xvi) West Warwick, where the exemption shall be equal to one hundred seventy dollars
- 33 (\$170); and
- 34 (xvii) Warwick, where the city council may, by ordinance, provide for an exemption of a

1 maximum of four thousand dollars (\$4,000).

2 (2) The exemption is applied to the property in the municipality where the person
3 resides, and if there is not sufficient property to exhaust the exemption, the person may claim the
4 balance in any other city or town where the person may own property; provided, that the
5 exemption is not allowed in favor of any person who is not a legal resident of the state, or unless
6 the person entitled to the exemption has presented to the assessors, on or before the last day on
7 which sworn statements may be filed with the assessors for the year for which exemption is
8 claimed, evidence that he or she is entitled, which evidence shall stand so long as his or her legal
9 residence remains unchanged; provided, however, that in the town of South Kingstown, the
10 person entitled to the exemption shall present to the assessors, at least five (5) days prior to the
11 certification of the tax roll, evidence that he or she is entitled to the exemption; and, provided,
12 further, that the exemption provided for in this subdivision to the extent that it applies in any city
13 or town, shall be applied in full to the total value of the person's real and tangible personal
14 property located in the city or town; and, provided, that there is an additional exemption from
15 taxation in the amount of one thousand dollars (\$1,000), except in:

16 (i) Central Falls, where the city council may, by ordinance, provide for an exemption of
17 a maximum of seven thousand five hundred dollars (\$7,500);

18 (ii) Cranston, where the exemption shall not exceed three thousand dollars (\$3,000);

19 (iii) Cumberland, where the town council may, by ordinance, provide for an exemption
20 of a maximum of twenty-two thousand five hundred dollars (\$22,500);

21 (iv) Lincoln, where the exemption shall not exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000);

22 (v) Newport, where the exemption is four thousand dollars (\$4,000);

23 (vi) New Shoreham, where the town council may, by ordinance, provide for an
24 exemption of a maximum of thirty-six thousand four hundred fifty dollars (\$36,450);

25 (vii) North Providence, where the town council may, by ordinance, provide for an
26 exemption of a maximum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000);

27 (viii) Smithfield, where the exemption is four thousand dollars (\$4,000);

28 (ix) Warren, where the exemption shall not exceed eleven thousand dollars (\$11,000);

29 and

30 (x) Barrington, where the town council may, by ordinance, provide for an exemption of
31 six thousand dollars (\$6,000) for real property; of the property of every honorably discharged
32 veteran of World War I or World War II, Korean or Vietnam, Grenada or Lebanon conflicts, the
33 Persian Gulf conflict, the Haitian conflict, the Somalian conflict and the Bosnian conflict at any
34 time during the period beginning August 2, 1990, and ending May 1, 1994, or in any conflict or

1 undeclared war for which a campaign ribbon or expeditionary medal was earned, who is
2 determined by the Veterans Administration of the United States of America to be totally disabled
3 through service connected disability and who presents to the assessors a certificate from the
4 veterans administration that the person is totally disabled, which certificate remains effectual so
5 long as the total disability continues.

6 (3) Provided, that:

7 (i) Burrillville may exempt real property of the totally disabled persons in the amount of
8 six thousand dollars (\$6,000);

9 (ii) Cumberland town council may, by ordinance, provide for an exemption of a
10 maximum of twenty-two thousand five hundred dollars (\$22,500);

11 (iii) Little Compton may, by ordinance, exempt real property of each of the totally
12 disabled persons in the amount of six thousand dollars (\$6,000);

13 (iv) Middletown may exempt the real property of each of the totally disabled persons in
14 the amount of five thousand dollars (\$5,000);

15 (v) New Shoreham town council may, by ordinance, provide for an exemption of a
16 maximum of thirty-six thousand four hundred fifty dollars (\$36,450);

17 (vi) North Providence town council may, by ordinance, provide for an exemption of a
18 maximum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000);

19 (vii) Tiverton town council may, by ordinance, exempt real property of each of the
20 totally disabled persons in the amount of five thousand dollars (\$5,000), subject to voters'
21 approval at the financial town meeting;

22 (viii) West Warwick town council may exempt the real property of each of the totally
23 disabled persons in an amount of two hundred dollars (\$200); and

24 (ix) Westerly town council may, by ordinance, provide for an exemption on the total
25 value of real and personal property to a maximum of forty-six thousand five hundred dollars
26 (\$46,500).

27 (4) There is an additional exemption from taxation in the town of:

28 Warren, where its town council may, by ordinance, provide for an exemption not
29 exceeding eight thousand two hundred fifty dollars (\$8,250), of the property of every honorably
30 discharged veteran of World War I or World War II, or Vietnam, Grenada or Lebanon conflicts,
31 the Persian Gulf conflict, the Haitian conflict, the Somalian conflict and the Bosnian conflict, at
32 any time during the period beginning August 2, 1990, and ending May 1, 1994, or in any conflict
33 or undeclared war for which a campaign ribbon or expeditionary medal was earned, who is
34 determined by the Veterans' Administration of the United States of America to be partially

1 disabled through a service connected disability and who presents to the assessors a certificate that
2 he is partially disabled, which certificate remains effectual so long as the partial disability
3 continues. Provided, however, that the Barrington town council may exempt real property of each
4 of the above named persons in the amount of three thousand dollars (\$3,000); Warwick city
5 council may, by ordinance, exempt real property of each of the above-named persons and to any
6 person who served in any capacity in the military or naval service during the period of time of the
7 Persian Gulf conflict, whether or not the person served in the geographical location of the
8 conflict, in the amount of four thousand dollars (\$4,000).

9 (5) Lincoln. There is an additional exemption from taxation in the town of Lincoln for
10 the property of each person who actually served in the military or naval service of the United
11 States in the Persian Gulf conflict and who was honorably discharged from the service, or who
12 was discharged under conditions other than dishonorable, or who, if not discharged, served
13 honorably, or of the unmarried widow or widower of that person. The exemption shall be
14 determined by the town council in an amount not to exceed ten thousand dollars (\$10,000).

15 (b) In addition to the exemption provided in subsection (a) of this section, there is a ten-
16 thousand dollar (\$10,000) exemption from local taxation on real property for any veteran and the
17 unmarried widow or widower of a deceased veteran of the military or naval service of the United
18 States who is determined, under applicable federal law by the Veterans Administration of the
19 United States, to be totally disabled through service-connected disability and who, by reason of
20 the disability, has received assistance in acquiring "specially adopted housing" under laws
21 administered by the veterans' administration; provided, that the real estate is occupied as his or
22 her domicile by the person; and, provided, that if the property is designed for occupancy by more
23 than one family, then only that value of so much of the house as is occupied by the person as his
24 or her domicile is exempted; and, provided, that satisfactory evidence of receipt of the assistance
25 is furnished to the assessors except in:

26 (1) Cranston, where the exemption shall not exceed thirty thousand dollars (\$30,000);

27 (2) Cumberland, where the town council may provide for an exemption not to exceed
28 seven thousand five hundred dollars (\$7,500);

29 (3) Newport, where the exemption is ten thousand dollars (\$10,000) or ten percent (10%)
30 of assessed valuation, whichever is greater;

31 (4) New Shoreham, where the town council may, by ordinance, provide for an
32 exemption of a maximum of thirty-six thousand four hundred fifty dollars (\$36,450);

33 (5) North Providence, where the town council may, by ordinance, provide for an
34 exemption not to exceed twelve thousand five hundred dollars (\$12,500);

1 (6) Westerly, where the town council may, by ordinance, provide for an exemption of a
2 maximum of forty thousand five hundred dollars (\$40,500); and

3 (7) Lincoln, where the town council may, by ordinance, provide for an exemption of a
4 maximum of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000).

5 (c) In addition to the previously provided exemptions, any veteran of the military or
6 naval service of the United States who is determined, under applicable federal law by the
7 Veterans' Administration of the United States to be totally disabled through service-connected
8 disability may, by ordinance, passed in the city or town where the veteran's property is assessed,
9 receive a ten thousand dollar (\$10,000) exemption from local taxation on his or her property
10 whether real or personal and if the veteran owns real property may be exempt from taxation by
11 any fire and/or lighting district; provided, that in the town of: North Kingstown, where the
12 amount of the exemption shall be eleven thousand dollars (\$11,000) commencing with the
13 December 31, 2002 assessment, and for the town of Westerly where the amount of the exemption
14 shall be thirty-nine thousand dollars (\$39,000) commencing with the December 31, 2005
15 assessment, and in the town of Cumberland, where the amount of the exemption shall not exceed
16 forty-seven thousand five hundred forty-four dollars (\$47,544), and in the city of Cranston,
17 commencing with December 31, 2016 assessment, where the exemption will not exceed two
18 hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) and be extended to the unmarried widow or widower of
19 such veteran.

20 (d) In determining whether or not a person is the widow or widower of a veteran for the
21 purposes of this section, the remarriage of the widow or widower shall not bar the furnishing of
22 the benefits of the section if the remarriage is void, has been terminated by death, or has been
23 annulled or dissolved by a court of competent jurisdiction.

24 (e) In addition to the previously provided exemptions, there may by ordinance passed in
25 the city or town where the person's property is assessed, be an additional fifteen thousand dollars
26 (\$15,000) exemption from local taxation on real and personal property for any veteran of military
27 or naval service of the United States or the unmarried widow or widower of person who has been
28 or shall be classified as, or determined to be, a prisoner of war by the Veterans' Administration of
29 the United States, except in:

30 (1) Westerly, where the town council may, by ordinance, provide for an exemption of a
31 maximum of sixty-eight thousand dollars (\$68,000); and

32 (2) Cumberland, where the town council may by ordinance provide for an exemption of
33 a maximum of forty-seven thousand five hundred forty-four dollars (\$47,544).

34 (f) Cities and towns granting exemptions under this section shall use the eligibility dates

1 specified in this section.

2 (g) The several cities and towns not previously authorized to provide an exemption for
3 those veterans who actually served in the Persian Gulf conflict may provide that exemption in the
4 amount authorized in this section for veterans of other recognized conflicts.

5 (h) Bristol, where the town council of Bristol may, by ordinance, provide for an
6 exemption for any veteran and the unmarried widow or widower of a deceased veteran of military
7 or naval service of the United States who is determined, under applicable federal law by the
8 Veterans' Administration of the United States to be partially disabled through service connected
9 disability.

10 (i) In addition to the previously provided exemption, any veteran who is discharged from
11 the military or naval service of the United States under conditions other than dishonorable, or an
12 officer who is honorably separated from military or naval service, who is determined, under
13 applicable federal law by the Veterans Administration of the United States to be totally and
14 permanently disabled through a service-connected disability, who owns a specially adapted
15 homestead that has been acquired or modified with the assistance of a special adaptive housing
16 grant from the Veteran's Administration and that meets Veteran's Administration and Americans
17 with disability act guidelines from adaptive housing or that has been acquired or modified using
18 proceeds from the sale of any previous homestead that was acquired with the assistance of a
19 special adaptive housing grant from the veteran's administration, the person or the person's
20 surviving spouse is exempt from all taxation on the homestead. Provided, that in the town of
21 Westerly where the amount of the above referenced exemption shall be forty-six thousand five
22 hundred dollars (\$46,500).

23 (j) The town of Coventry may provide by ordinance a one thousand dollar (\$1,000)
24 exemption for any person who is an active member of the armed forces of the United States.

25 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF

A N A C T

RELATING TO TAXATION - PROPERTY SUBJECT TO TAXATION - VETERANS'
EXEMPTIONS

1 This act would create a property tax exemption of up to \$250,000 and for totally disabled
2 veterans residing in the city of Cranston and would also apply to any surviving spouse of that
3 veteran.

4 This act would take effect upon passage.

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