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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2021

A N A C T

RELATING TO TAXATION -- LEVY AND ASSESSMENT OF LOCAL TAXES

Introduced By: Senator Maryellen Goodwin

Date Introduced: May 20, 2021

Referred To: Senate Finance

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Section 44-5-11.8 of the General Laws in Chapter 44-5 entitled "Levy and
2 Assessment of Local Taxes" is hereby amended to read as follows:

3 **44-5-11.8. Tax classification.**

4 (a) Upon the completion of any comprehensive revaluation or any update, in accordance
5 with § 44-5-11.6, any city or town may adopt a tax classification plan, by ordinance, with the
6 following limitations:

7 (1) The designated classes of property shall be limited to the classes as defined in
8 subsection (b) of this section.

9 (2) The effective tax rate applicable to any class, excluding class 4, shall not exceed by
10 fifty percent (50%) the rate applicable to any other class, except in the city of Providence and the
11 town of Glocester and the town of East Greenwich; however, in the year following a revaluation or
12 statistical revaluation or update, the city or town council of any municipality may, by ordinance,
13 adopt tax rates for the property class for all ratable tangible personal property no greater than twice
14 the rate applicable to any other class, provided that the municipality documents to, and receives
15 written approval from, the office of municipal affairs that the rate difference is necessary to ensure
16 that the estimated tax levy on the property class for all ratable tangible personal property is not
17 reduced from the prior year as a result of the revaluation or statistical revaluation.

18 (3) Any tax rate changes from one year to the next shall be applied such that the same
19 percentage rate change is applicable to all classes, excluding class 4, except in the city of

1 Providence and the town of Glocester and the town of East Greenwich.

2 (4) Notwithstanding subsections (a)(2) and (a)(3) of this section, the tax rates applicable to
3 wholesale and retail inventory within Class 3 as defined in subsection (b) of this section are
4 governed by § 44-3-29.1.

5 (5) The tax rates applicable to motor vehicles within Class 4, as defined in subsection (b)
6 of this section, are governed by § 44-34.1-1.

7 (6) The provisions of chapter 35 of this title relating to property tax and fiscal disclosure
8 apply to the reporting of, and compliance with, these classification restrictions.

9 (b) Classes of Property.

10 (1) Class 1: Residential real estate consisting of no more than five (5) dwelling units; land
11 classified as open space; and dwellings on leased land including mobile homes. In the city of
12 Providence, this class may also include residential properties containing partial commercial or
13 business uses and residential real estate of more than five (5) dwelling units.

14 (i) A homestead exemption provision is also authorized within this class; provided
15 however, that the actual, effective rate applicable to property qualifying for this exemption shall be
16 construed as the standard rate for this class against which the maximum rate applicable to another
17 class shall be determined, except in the town of Glocester [and the city of Providence](#).

18 (ii) In lieu of a homestead exemption, any city or town may divide this class into non-
19 owner and owner-occupied property and adopt separate tax rates in compliance with the within tax
20 rate restrictions.

21 (2) Class 2: Commercial and industrial real estate; residential properties containing partial
22 commercial or business uses; and residential real estate of more than five (5) dwelling units. In the
23 city of Providence, properties containing partial commercial or business uses and residential real
24 estate of more than five (5) dwelling units may be included in Class 1.

25 (3) Class 3: All ratable, tangible personal property.

26 (4) Class 4: Motor vehicles and trailers subject to the excise tax created by chapter 34 of
27 this title.

28 (c) The city council of the city of Providence and the town council of the town of Glocester
29 and the town council of the town of East Greenwich may, by ordinance, provide for, and adopt, a
30 tax rate on various classes as they shall deem appropriate. Provided, that the tax rate for Class 2
31 shall not be more than two (2) times the tax rate of Class 1 and the tax rate applicable to Class 3
32 shall not exceed the tax rate of Class 1 by more than two hundred percent (200%). Glocester shall
33 be able to establish homestead exemptions up to fifty percent (50%) of value and the calculation
34 provided in subsection (b)(1)(i) shall not be used in setting the differential tax rates.

1 (d) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, the town council of the
2 town of Middletown may hereafter, by ordinance, adopt a tax classification plan in accordance with
3 the provisions of subsections (a) and (b) of this section, to be applicable to taxes assessed on or
4 after the assessment date of December 31, 2002.

5 (e) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, the town council of the
6 town of Little Compton may hereafter, by ordinance, adopt a tax classification plan in accordance
7 with the provisions of subsections (a) and (b) of this section and the provisions of § 44-5-79, to be
8 applicable to taxes assessed on or after the assessment date of December 31, 2004.

9 (f) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, the town council of the
10 town of Scituate may hereafter, by ordinance, change its tax assessment from fifty percent (50%)
11 of value to one hundred percent (100%) of value on residential and commercial/industrial/mixed-
12 use property, while tangible property is assessed at one hundred percent (100%) of cost, less
13 depreciation; provided, however, the tax rate for Class 3 (tangible) property shall not exceed the
14 tax rate for Class 1 (residential) property by more than two hundred thirteen percent (213%). This
15 provision shall apply whether or not the fiscal year is also a revaluation year.

16 (g) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsections (a) and (b) of this section, the town
17 council of the town of Coventry may hereafter, by ordinance, adopt a tax classification plan
18 providing that Class 1, as set forth in subsection (b) "Classes of Property" of this section, may also
19 include residential properties containing commercial or business uses, such ordinance to be
20 applicable to taxes assessed on or after the assessment date of December 31, 2014.

21 (h) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, the town council of the
22 town of East Greenwich may hereafter, by ordinance, adopt a tax classification plan in accordance
23 with the provisions of subsections (a) and (b) of this section, to be applicable to taxes assessed on
24 or after the assessment date of December 31, 2018. Further, the East Greenwich town council may
25 adopt, repeal, or modify that tax classification plan for any tax year thereafter, notwithstanding the
26 provisions of subsection (a) of this section.

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

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
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- 1 This act would clarify the tax classification statute pertaining to homestead exemptions in
- 2 the city of Providence exempting the city from certain rate calculations.
- 3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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