Introduced ______________
Public Hearing ______________
Council Action ______________
Executive Action ______________
Effective Date ______________

County Council of Howard County, Maryland

2026 Legislative Session — Legislative Day No. 12

Bill No. 67 -2026

Introduced by: Opel Jones

SHORT TITLE: Property Tax Credit for Seniors – Amend Maximum Credit Amount

AN ACT amending the Property Tax Credit for Seniors in order to, beginning in Tax Year 2027, increase the cap on the amount of the property tax credit after the homestead credit is applied; and generally relating to the property tax credit for seniors.

Introduced and read first time ______________________, 2026. Ordered posted and hearing scheduled.

By order____
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

Having been posted and notice of time & place of hearing & title of Bill having been published according to Charter, the Bill was read for a second time at a public hearing on ___________________, 2026.

By order ____
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

This Bill was read the third time on ___________, 2026 and Passed ___, Passed with amendments _______, Failed _______.

By order ____
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

Sealed with the County Seal and presented to the County Executive for approval this ________day of _____________, 2026 at ___ a.m./p.m.

By order ____
Michelle Harrod, Administrator

Approved by the County Executive ___________________________, 2026

____
Calvin Ball, County Executive

NOTE: [[text in brackets]] indicates deletions from existing law; TEXT IN SMALL CAPITALS indicates additions to existing law; ~~Strike-out~~ indicates material deleted by amendment; <u>Underlining</u> indicates material added by amendment.

LEG2753

Section 1. Be It Enacted *by the County Council of Howard County, Maryland, that the Howard County Code is amended as follows:*

By amending:

Title 20. - "Taxes, Charges, and Fees"

Subtitle 1. "Real Property Tax; Administration, Credits, and Enforcement."

Section 20.129. "Property tax credit for senior citizens."

Subsection (b). "Credit Established:"

Paragraph (2)

Title 20. – Taxes, Charges and Fees

Subtitle 1. Real Property Tax; Administration, Credits, and Enforcement.

Section 20.129. Property tax credit for senior citizens.

(a) *Definitions:*

(1) In this section, the following terms have the meanings indicated:

(2) *Combined income* means the combined gross income of all individuals who actually reside in a dwelling except an individual who:

(i) Is a dependent of the homeowner under § 152 of the Internal Revenue Code; or

(ii) Pays a reasonable amount for rent or room and board.

(3) *Net worth* means, after deducting outstanding liabilities, the sum of the current market value of all assets:

(i) Including real property, cash, savings accounts, stocks, bonds, and other investments; but

(ii) Not including the dwelling for which a property tax credit is sought under this section, the cash value of any life insurance policies on the life of the homeowner, and tangible personal property.

(b) *Credit Established:*

(1) In accordance with section 9-245 of the Tax-Property Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland, the owner of real property may receive a property tax credit against the

County property tax imposed on the property if the property is owned, wholly or partly, by an individual:

(i) Who is at least 65 years old;

(ii) Who uses the property as the individual's principal residence for at least the period that would be required to qualify for the credit under section 9-104 of the Tax-Property Article of the Maryland Annotated Code;

(iii) Who lives in a household with a combined income that does not exceed 500 percent of the most recent poverty guidelines for a household of two individuals updated periodically in the Federal Register by the United States Department of Health and Human Services under 42 U.S.C. 9902(2); and

(iv) Who lives in a household:

1. For Tax Year 2025, with a combined net worth that does not exceed $800,000; and

2. For Tax Year 2026, and after, the Department of Finance shall adjust the maximum allowable amount of combined household net worth to account for inflation as follows:

a. The Department of Finance shall make annual adjustments for inflation based on the Consumer Price Index for all Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for the Baltimore-Columbia-Towson, MD area, or a successor index, published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the United States Department of Labor; and

b. The Department of Finance shall make notification of the adjusted maximum combined net worth to the public no later than the last day of February in each tax year subsequent to Tax Year 2025.

(2) The amount of the credit shall equal **[[**25**]]** 50 percent of the County property tax due in the current year after applying the homestead credit authorized under section 9-105 of the Tax-Property Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

(3) The amount of the credit shall be calculated after all other credits granted for that property under this subtitle or the Tax-Property Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland have been applied so that the credit granted under this section makes up any difference between (i) the sum of all the other property tax credits and (ii) the amount that this credit would be if there were no other credits.

(4) Property taxes attributable to an increase in the value of the property because of substantial improvements to the property shall be excluded from the calculation described in paragraph (2) of this subsection.

(c) *Duration of Credit.* The tax credit authorized by this section continues as long as an owner and the property remain qualified under subsection (b) of this section.

(d) *Application.* To receive the credit, a property owner shall apply for all other credits that may be available for that property and submit an application to the Department of Finance:

(1) On the form that the Department of Finance Requires;

(2) That demonstrates that the owner is entitled to the credit; and

(3) On or before the date that the Department of Finance sets.

(e) *Administration.* The Department of Finance may adopt guidelines and procedures to administer this section.

(f) *Publicity:*

(1) The Director of Finance shall develop and carry out a plan to publicize the credit authorized by this section. The plan shall be designed to reach those taxpayers most likely to be eligible for the credit.

(2) The Office of Aging and Independence, or another appropriate unit of County Government that the County Executive selects, shall develop and carry out a plan to educate senior citizens about the credit authorized by this section.

(g) *Effective Date.* The credit authorized by this section applies to tax years beginning after June 30, 2007.

(h) *Report.* Subject to section 22.1000 of the County Code, on or before September 30 of each year, the Department of Finance shall submit a report to the County Council and the County Executive that includes the number of applications and amounts of credits granted under this section.

Section 2. And Be It Further Enacted *by the County Council of Howard County, Maryland that this Act shall be applied to and interpreted to affect all eligible property owners beginning in Tax Year 2027.*

Section 3. And Be It Further Enacted *by the County Council of Howard County, Maryland that this Act shall become effective 61 days after its enactment.*