

Dear Assessing Board & City Council:

It is my understanding that you will be meeting very close to the 15th of April and making a determination regarding income and asset limits for the elderly exemption for 2019. I would like to make a plea on behalf of my mother-in-law and, I'm sure, many many other seniors who reside in Concord.

Last year my MIL made about \$40 over the annual income limit for getting the exemption. She and I were heartbroken. She is 94 and has been a resident of Concord, paying a considerable amount of taxes, for almost forty years. Now she is in very ill health (I actually did not expect last year to even have the opportunity to be having this "discussion"). However, instead of having her receive a *meager* dividend check each month, the money was reinvested making it, I believe, an asset as opposed to income. Therefore, I was *very* optimistic regarding her chances of getting the tax exemption this time around.

Then, through the grapevine, I heard that the Board may be considering an increase in allowable income. Hurrah! I was even more sure than ever that my MIL would be eligible for the exemption. At least until two things, normally very positive, happened. She had not gotten much of any interest income in 2018, and this year and in 2019 it about doubled to a whopping \$44 or so. However, I felt this extra income may be offset, *if* the Board were to increase the income limit. But, alas, another much greater hurdle came along. My MIL's Social Security benefit increased by \$558 for the year!

Since I am sure there are many, many seniors in Concord who will not only not qualify for the exemption *this* year (and have been planning for a few years to be eligible as first time applicants) but who may also *lose* the benefit they have had in the previous year/s - all because of the SS benefit increase - I would like to submit a recommendation for your consideration. *Please* consider freezing all Social Security increases at the 2018 level. Or at least consider freezing them for those making less than a certain reasonable amount. Many families, who may have been considered reasonably well off financially in past years, are struggling with the changes in the economy. They may have just had a good share of their retirement funds wiped out within a few days because of the stock market plunge. If the board takes into consideration the seniors who have recently retired (maybe they are 68-70+ years old and have been able to take the elderly exemption since age 65) and are now facing the loss of the elderly exemption - or even the possibility of getting it, just as my MIL is, this could be a devastating blow. And, (who would have thought) it might all be due to a SS increase (unplanned) or an increase in income from stock dividends (now possibly wiped out).

Over and above my MIL's situation, I believe many, many people could benefit from the above recommendation - or at least a similar one - because they are in the same boat. I implore the board to give a great deal of serious consideration to their final decision regarding the Elderly Exemption this year. Also, in order to protect my MIL's privacy, I am anonymously presenting this request. Thank you for all of the work you do for us - no matter the outcome.

Regards, Concerned Citizen