# Second Regular Session Seventieth General Assembly STATE OF COLORADO

# **INTRODUCED**

LLS NO. 16-0453.01 Jason Gelender x4330

**HOUSE BILL 16-1175** 

### **HOUSE SPONSORSHIP**

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# **House Committees**

#### Finance

#### **Senate Committees**

		A BILL FOR AN	ACT	
101	CONCERNING THE	ADMINISTRATION	OF THE	PROPERTY TAX
102	<b>EXEMPTIONS</b>	FOR QUALIFYING	SENIORS	AND DISABLED
103	VETERANS.			

# **Bill Summary**

(Note: This summary applies to this bill as introduced and does not reflect any amendments that may be subsequently adopted. If this bill passes third reading in the house of introduction, a bill summary that applies to the reengrossed version of this bill will be available at <a href="http://www.leg.state.co.us/billsummaries">http://www.leg.state.co.us/billsummaries</a>.)

**Legislative Audit Committee.** The Colorado constitution and state statutes exempt 50% of the first \$200,000 of actual value of the owner-occupied primary residence of a qualifying senior or disabled veteran from property taxation. In addition to other limitations on the exemption, no matter how many residences a senior or a disabled veteran

owns, the senior or disabled veteran may claim an exemption for only one primary residence and a married couple may claim an exemption for only one primary residence even if they own multiple residences or live apart in separate residences.

During the 2015 legislative interim, the office of the state auditor presented an audit of the senior and disabled veteran property tax exemption program to the legislative audit committee. The audit identified several statutory and administrative process deficiencies that have made it difficult for the state to prevent individual seniors and disabled veterans and married couples from claiming and being allowed multiple exemptions and from claiming and receiving exemptions for residences other than owner-occupied primary residences. The bill implements audit recommendations as follows:

- The department of revenue, after receiving from the property tax administrator (administrator) a list of individuals who are claiming the exemption, is required to share with the administrator certain taxpayer information pertaining to the listed individuals, including their names, social security numbers, marital and income tax filing status, and residency status, needed by the administrator to prevent exemption applicants who claim multiple exemptions or exemptions for residential real property that they do not own and occupy as their primary residence from receiving the exemption;
- ! The administrator must work with the state registrar of vital statistics to annually identify individuals who have received exemptions and have died so that the administrator and county assessors can terminate exemptions for which no living individual qualifies;
- ! The scope of the administrator's exemption application review responsibilities is expanded and the timelines and process by which the review is conducted is modified in order to enhance the ability of the administrator to prevent exemptions from being erroneously allowed;
- ! The administrator is required to annually conduct a second review of exemptions allowed in each county for the immediately preceding property tax year, to identify any exemptions that should not have been allowed, and to advise the state treasurer to reduce the amount of reimbursement paid to each county treasurer to account for any disallowed exemptions; and
- ! In addition, if the administrator identifies any exemption improperly allowed for a prior property tax year commencing on or after January 1, 2016, for which the state treasurer reimbursed a county treasurer or identifies

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any exemption properly allowed for such a prior property tax year for which the state treasurer did not reimburse a county treasurer, the administrator must advise the state treasurer to adjust the current year reimbursement to the county treasurer to correct the error.

1	Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:
2	SECTION 1. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 25-2-103, add (4.5)
3	as follows:
4	25-2-103. Centralized registration system for all vital statistics
5	- appointment of registrar - rules. (4.5) NOTWITHSTANDING ANY OTHER
6	PROVISION OF LAW THAT LIMITS THE SHARING OF VITAL STATISTICS, AFTER
7	RECEIVING THE LIST OF NAMES AND SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS OF
8	INDIVIDUALS WHO RECEIVED PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS AS EITHER
9	QUALIFYING SENIORS OR DISABLED VETERANS FOR THE PRIOR YEAR THAT
10	IS PROVIDED BY THE PROPERTY TAX ADMINISTRATOR PURSUANT TO
11	SECTION 39-3-207, C.R.S., THE STATE REGISTRAR SHALL IDENTIFY ALL
12	INDIVIDUALS ON THE LIST WHO HAVE DIED AND TRANSMIT A LIST OF THE
13	NAMES AND SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS OF SUCH INDIVIDUALS TO THE
14	ADMINISTRATOR.
15	SECTION 2. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 39-3-205, add (4) (a)
16	(III) as follows:
17	39-3-205. Exemption applications - penalty for providing false
18	information - confidentiality. (4) (a) Completed exemption applications
19	shall be kept confidential; except that:
20	(III) THE ADMINISTRATOR MAY SHARE INFORMATION CONTAINED
21	IN AN EXEMPTION APPLICATION, INCLUDING ANY SOCIAL SECURITY
22	NUMBER SET FORTH IN THE APPLICATION, WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF
23	REVENUE TO THE EXTENT NECESSARY TO ENABLE THE ADMINISTRATOR TO

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1 VERIFY THAT THE APPLICANT SATISFIES LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR 2 CLAIMING THE EXEMPTION. 3 **SECTION 3.** In Colorado Revised Statutes, 39-3-206, **amend** (1) 4 (b), (1.5) (b), (2) (a), (2) (a.5), and (2) (a.7) as follows: 5 39-3-206. Notice to individuals returning incomplete or 6 nonqualifying exemption applications - denial of exemption -7 **administrative remedies.** (1) (b) If the information provided on or with 8 an application for the exemption allowed to qualifying seniors under 9 section 39-3-203 (1) indicates that the applicant is not entitled to the 10 exemption, or is insufficient to allow the assessor to determine whether 11 or not the applicant is entitled to the exemption, the assessor shall deny 12 the application and mail to the applicant a statement providing the reasons 13 for the denial and informing the applicant of the applicant's right to 14 contest the denial pursuant to subsection (2) of this section. The assessor 15 shall mail the statement no later than August 15 AUGUST 1 of the property 16 tax year for which the exemption application was filed. 17 (1.5) (b) If the information provided on or with an application for 18 the exemption allowed to qualifying disabled veterans under section 19 39-3-203 (1.5) that is forwarded by the division to an assessor pursuant 20 to section 39-3-205 (2.5) indicates that the applicant is not entitled to the 21 exemption, or is insufficient to allow the assessor to determine whether 22 or not the applicant is entitled to the exemption, the assessor shall deny 23 the application and mail to the applicant a statement providing the reasons 24 for the denial and informing the applicant of the applicant's right to 25 contest the denial pursuant to subsection (2) of this section. The assessor 26 shall mail the statement no later than August 15 AUGUST 1 of the property 27 tax year for which the exemption application was filed.

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(2) (a) An applicant whose exemption application has been denied pursuant to paragraph (b) of subsection (1) or paragraph (b) of subsection (1.5) of this section may contest the denial by requesting a hearing before the county commissioners sitting as the county board of equalization no later than September August 15 of the property tax year for which the exemption application was filed. The hearing shall be held on or after September August 1 and no later than October September 1 of the property tax year for which the exemption application was filed, and the decision of the county board of equalization shall not be IS NOT subject to further administrative appeal by either the applicant or the assessor. An applicant may not contest a determination by the division that the applicant is not a qualifying disabled veteran at a hearing requested pursuant to this paragraph (a).

(a.5) An individual who wishes to claim the exemption for qualifying seniors allowed by section 39-3-203 (1), but who has not timely filed an exemption application with the assessor by July 15, may file a late exemption application no later than the September August 15 that immediately follows that deadline. The assessor shall accept any such application but may not accept any late application filed after September August 15. The assessor shall grant an exemption if an accepted late application establishes that the applicant is entitled to the exemption. A decision of an assessor to disallow the filing of a late application after September August 15 or to grant or deny an exemption to an applicant who has filed a late application after July 15 but no later than September August 15 is final, and an applicant who is denied late filing or an exemption may not contest the denial.

(a.7) An individual who wishes to claim the exemption for

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1	qualifying disabled veterans allowed by section 39-3-203 (1.5), but who
2	has not timely filed an exemption application with the division, may
3	request that the division waive the application deadline and allow the
4	individual to file a late exemption application no later than the September
5	† AUGUST 1 that immediately follows the original application deadline.
6	The division may accept an application if, in the division's sole discretion,
7	the applicant shows good cause for not timely filing an application. If the
8	division accepts a late application, it shall determine whether the
9	applicant is a qualifying disabled veteran and shall mail notice of its
10	determination to the applicant no later than the September AUGUST 25
11	that immediately follows the late application deadline. If the division
12	determines that a veteran is a qualifying disabled veteran, it shall mail a
13	copy of the notice of its determination to the assessor for the county in
14	which the property for which the applicant has claimed the exemption is
15	located and shall include with the notice a copy of the applicant's
16	exemption application. The assessor shall grant an exemption if the notice
17	and application forwarded by the division to the assessor establish that the
18	applicant is entitled to the exemption. A decision of the division to allow
19	or disallow the filing of a late application or of an assessor to grant or
20	deny an exemption to an applicant who has filed a late application is final,
21	and an applicant who is denied late filing or an exemption may not
22	contest the denial.
23	<b>SECTION 4.</b> In Colorado Revised Statutes, 39-3-207, <b>amend</b> (1)
24	introductory portion, (2), (3) introductory portion, and (4) (a); and add
25	(3.5), (3.7), and (4.5) as follows:
26	39-3-207. Reporting of exemptions - reimbursement to local

 $\begin{tabular}{ll} \textbf{governmental entities-transfer of unencumbered balances.} \end{tabular} \begin{tabular}{ll} \textbf{No} \end{tabular}$ 

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1 later than October 10, 2002, and no later than each October 10 thereafter 2 THROUGH OCTOBER 10, 2016, AND NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 10, 2017, 3 AND NO LATER THAN EACH SEPTEMBER 10 THEREAFTER, each assessor 4 shall forward to the administrator a report on the exemptions allowed in 5 his or her county for the current property tax year. The report shall 6 include: 7 (2) (a) (I) The administrator shall examine the reports sent by each 8 assessor pursuant to subsection (1) of this section to ensure that no 9 applicant has claimed more than one AN exemption WITHOUT MEETING 10 ALL LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CLAIMING THE EXEMPTION. No later than 11 November 1, 2002, and no later than each November 1 thereafter, if the 12 administrator determines that an applicant has claimed more than one 13 exemption, the administrator shall provide written notice to the applicant 14 that the applicant has claimed more than one exemption and is therefore 15 not entitled to any exemption. NO LATER THAN NOVEMBER 1, 2016, AND 16 NO LATER THAN EACH NOVEMBER 1 THEREAFTER, IF THE ADMINISTRATOR 17 DETERMINES THAT THE APPLICANT AND THE APPLICANT'S SPOUSE HAVE 18 CLAIMED SEPARATE EXEMPTIONS IN VIOLATION OF SECTION 39-3-203 (5), 19 THAT THE APPLICANT HAS CLAIMED AN EXEMPTION FOR RESIDENTIAL REAL 20 PROPERTY THAT THE APPLICANT DOES NOT OWN AND OCCUPY AS THE 21 APPLICANT'S PRIMARY RESIDENCE AS REQUIRED BY SECTION 39-3-203(1), 22 OR THAT THE APPLICANT IS OTHERWISE INELIGIBLE TO CLAIM AN 23 EXEMPTION, THE ADMINISTRATOR SHALL PROVIDE WRITTEN NOTICE TO THE 24 APPLICANT THAT THE APPLICANT IS INELIGIBLE FOR THE EXEMPTION AND 25 SPECIFY THE REASONS FOR THE DETERMINATION OF INELIGIBILITY. The 26 notice shall also include a statement specifying the deadline and 27 procedures for protesting the denial of the EXEMPTION OR exemptions

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(II) An applicant whose claims for exemption are denied by the administrator pursuant to subparagraph (I) of this paragraph (a) may file a written protest with the administrator no later than November 15 of the year in which the EXEMPTION OR exemptions were denied. IF THE GROUND FOR THE DENIAL IS THAT THE APPLICANT, OR THE APPLICANT AND THE APPLICANT'S SPOUSE, CLAIMED MULTIPLE EXEMPTIONS, the sole ground for a protest shall be is that the applicant, OR THE APPLICANT AND THE APPLICANT'S SPOUSE, filed only one claim for an exemption and the protest shall specify property or properties identified by the administrator in the notice denying exemptions for which no exemption was claimed. The administrator shall request that any appropriate assessor check the assessor's records of exemption applications to determine whether the applicant filed a disputed exemption application and shall decide the protest accordingly. IF THE GROUND FOR THE DENIAL IS THAT THE APPLICANT IS NOT AN OWNER-OCCUPIER OF THE RESIDENTIAL REAL PROPERTY FOR WHICH AN EXEMPTION IS CLAIMED, THE SOLE GROUNDS FOR A PROTEST ARE THAT THE APPLICANT ACTUALLY IS AN OWNER-OCCUPIER OR THAT THE APPLICANT QUALIFIES FOR AN EXEMPTION FOR THE PROPERTY UNDER SECTION 39-3-203 (6). If a protest is denied, the administrator shall mail the applicant a written statement of the basis for the denial and a copy of each exemption application filed with an assessor that the applicant claimed had not been filed.

(b) No later than December 1, 2002, and no later than each December 1 thereafter, and after examining the reports sent by each assessor, denying claims for exemptions, and deciding protests in accordance with paragraph (a) of this subsection (2), the administrator

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shall provide written notice to the assessor of each county in which an exemption application has been denied because the applicant filed multiple exemption applications with the identity of the applicant who filed multiple exemption applications and the denial of the exemption. No LATER THAN DECEMBER 1, 2016, AND NO LATER THAN EACH DECEMBER 1 THEREAFTER, AND AFTER EXAMINING THE REPORTS SENT BY EACH ASSESSOR, DENYING CLAIMS FOR EXEMPTIONS, AND DECIDING PROTESTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH PARAGRAPH (a) OF THIS SUBSECTION (2), THE ADMINISTRATOR SHALL ALSO PROVIDE WRITTEN NOTICE TO THE ASSESSOR OF EACH COUNTY IN WHICH AN EXEMPTION APPLICATION HAS BEEN DENIED FOR ANY OTHER REASON WITH THE IDENTITY OF THE APPLICANT AND THE DENIAL OF THE EXEMPTION, SPECIFYING THE REASON FOR THE DENIAL.

(3) No later than April 1, 2003, and no later than each April 1 thereafter THROUGH APRIL 1, 2016, to enable the state treasurer to issue a reimbursement warrant to each treasurer in accordance with subsection (4) of this section, each treasurer shall forward to the state treasurer a report on the exemptions allowed in his or her county for the previous property tax year. No LATER THAN MARCH 1, 2017, AND NO LATER THAN MARCH 1 OF EACH YEAR THEREAFTER, EACH TREASURER SHALL FORWARD THE REPORT TO THE ADMINISTRATOR, WHO SHALL CROSS-CHECK IT AS SPECIFIED IN SUBSECTION (3.5) OF THIS SECTION BEFORE CORRECTING IT, IF NECESSARY, AND FORWARDING IT TO THE STATE TREASURER TO ENABLE THE STATE TREASURER TO ISSUE A REIMBURSEMENT WARRANT TO EACH TREASURER IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTION (4) OF THIS SECTION. The report shall include:

(3.5) AFTER RECEIVING REPORTS FROM EACH TREASURER PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (3) OF THIS SECTION, THE ADMINISTRATOR

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I	SHALL CROSS-CHECK THE REPORTS TO IDENTIFY ANY EXEMPTION ALLOWED
2	IN A COUNTY THAT MUST BE DENIED DUE TO A FAILURE OF THE INDIVIDUAL
3	ALLOWED THE EXEMPTION TO SATISFY ALL LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR
4	CLAIMING THE EXEMPTION. THE ADMINISTRATOR SHALL REMOVE ANY
5	EXEMPTION THAT MUST BE DENIED FROM THE REPORT IN WHICH IT
6	APPEARS AND SHALL FORWARD ALL REPORTS TO THE STATE TREASURER NO
7	LATER THAN THE APRIL 1 IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE RECEIPT OF THE
8	REPORTS BY THE ADMINISTRATOR. IN ADDITION, IF THE ADMINISTRATOR
9	IDENTIFIES ANY EXEMPTION IMPROPERLY ALLOWED FOR A PRIOR PROPERTY
10	TAX YEAR COMMENCING ON OR AFTER JANUARY 1, 2016, FOR WHICH THE
11	STATE TREASURER REIMBURSED A TREASURER PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION
12	(4) OF THIS SECTION OR IDENTIFIES ANY EXEMPTION PROPERLY ALLOWED
13	FOR SUCH A PRIOR PROPERTY TAX YEAR FOR WHICH THE STATE TREASURER
14	DID NOT REIMBURSE A TREASURER, THE ADMINISTRATOR SHALL ADVISE
15	THE STATE TREASURER TO ADJUST THE CURRENT YEAR REIMBURSEMENT
16	TO THE TREASURER TO CORRECT THE ERROR. NO LATER THAN THAT APRIL
17	1, THE ADMINISTRATOR SHALL ALSO NOTIFY THE TREASURER AND
18	ASSESSOR OF EACH COUNTY OF THE EXEMPTIONS REMOVED FROM THE
19	REPORT FOR THE COUNTY AND ANY RESULTING AND OTHER ADJUSTMENTS
20	TO THE AMOUNT OF CURRENT YEAR REIMBURSEMENT TO BE PAID BY THE
21	STATE TREASURER TO THE TREASURER.
22	(3.7) IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 25-2-103 (4.5), C.R.S., THE
23	ADMINISTRATOR SHALL ANNUALLY PROVIDE TO THE STATE REGISTRAR OF
24	VITAL STATISTICS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND
25	ENVIRONMENT A LIST, BY NAME AND SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER, OF EVERY
26	INDIVIDUAL WHO RECEIVED AN EXEMPTION FOR THE IMMEDIATELY
27	PRECEDING YEAR SO THAT THE REGISTRAR CAN PROVIDE TO THE

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ADMINISTRATOR A LIST OF ALL SUCH INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE DIED. NO LATER THAN APRIL 1, 2017, AND NO LATER THAN EACH APRIL 1 THEREAFTER, THE ADMINISTRATOR SHALL FORWARD TO THE ASSESSOR OF EACH COUNTY, THE NAME AND SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER OF EACH DECEASED INDIVIDUAL WHO RECEIVED AN EXEMPTION FOR THE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING YEAR FOR RESIDENTIAL REAL PROPERTY LOCATED WITHIN THE COUNTY SO THAT THE ASSESSOR CAN TERMINATE THE EXEMPTION FOR THE PROPERTY.

(4) (a) (I) In accordance with section 3.5 of article X of the state constitution, no later than April 15, 2003, and NO LATER THAN each April 15 thereafter, the state treasurer shall issue a warrant to each treasurer for the amount needed to fully reimburse all local governmental entities within the treasurer's county for the amount of property tax revenues lost as a result of the application of the exemption to property taxes that accrued during the previous property tax year and are payable during the year in which the state treasurer issues the warrant. The reimbursement shall be paid from the state general fund and shall not be subject to the statutory limitation on state general fund appropriations set forth in section 24-75-201.1, C.R.S.

(II) AS USED IN THIS PARAGRAPH (a), WITH RESPECT TO EXEMPTIONS ALLOWED FOR PROPERTY TAX YEARS COMMENCING ON OR AFTER JANUARY 1, 2016, "PROPERTY TAX REVENUES LOST AS A RESULT OF THE APPLICATION OF THE EXEMPTION" INCLUDES ONLY THOSE REVENUES LOST AS A RESULT OF EXEMPTIONS PROPERLY ALLOWED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS PART 2 AND DOES NOT INCLUDE ANY REVENUES LOST AS A RESULT OF AN EXEMPTION BEING ERRONEOUSLY ALLOWED.

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1	(4.5) In accordance with subsection $(3.5)$ of this section,
2	FOR ANY PROPERTY TAX YEAR COMMENCING ON OR AFTER JANUARY 1,
3	2016, THE STATE TREASURER SHALL NOT REIMBURSE A TREASURER FOR
4	PROPERTY TAX REVENUES LOST AS A RESULT OF AN EXEMPTION
5	ERRONEOUSLY ALLOWED IN THE TREASURER'S COUNTY. IF, PURSUANT TO
6	SUBSECTION (3.5) OF THIS SECTION, THE ADMINISTRATOR ADVISES THE
7	STATE TREASURER THAT THE STATE TREASURER HAS PROVIDED EITHER
8	TOO MUCH OR TOO LITTLE REIMBURSEMENT TO A TREASURER FOR
9	EXEMPTIONS ALLOWED IN THE TREASURER'S COUNTY FOR ANY PRIOR
10	PROPERTY TAX YEAR COMMENCING ON OR AFTER JANUARY 1, 2016, THE
11	STATE TREASURER SHALL ADJUST THE REIMBURSEMENT FOR THE CURRENT
12	PROPERTY TAX YEAR AS DIRECTED BY THE ADMINISTRATOR IN ORDER TO
13	CORRECT THE ERROR.
14	SECTION 5. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 39-8-104, amend (2)
15	(b) as follows:
16	<b>39-8-104. Notice of meeting.</b> (2) (b) Prior to <del>September 1, 2002</del>
17	AUGUST 1, 2017, and prior to each September AUGUST 1 thereafter, the
18	county clerk and recorder shall give notice in at least one issue of a
19	newspaper published in his or her county of any date or dates between
20	September August 1 and October September 1 on which the county
21	commissioners, sitting as the county board of equalization, shall hear
22	contests of property tax exemption denials as required by section
23	39-3-206 (2).
24	SECTION 6. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 39-21-113, add (24)
25	as follows:
26	39-21-113. Reports and returns - rule. (24) NOTWITHSTANDING
27	ANY OTHER PROVISION OF THIS SECTION, THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AFTER

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1	RECEIVING FROM THE PROPERTY TAX ADMINISTRATOR A LIST OF
2	INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE CLAIMING THE PROPERTY TAX EXEMPTIONS FOR
3	QUALIFYING SENIORS AND DISABLED VETERANS ALLOWED UNDER PART 2
4	OF ARTICLE 3 OF THIS TITLE, SHALL PROVIDE TO THE PROPERTY TAX
5	ADMINISTRATOR INFORMATION PERTAINING TO THE LISTED INDIVIDUALS.
6	INCLUDING THEIR NAMES, SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBERS, MARITAL AND
7	INCOME TAX FILING STATUS, AND RESIDENCY STATUS, NEEDED BY THE
8	ADMINISTRATOR TO VERIFY THAT THE EXEMPTION IS ALLOWED ONLY TO
9	APPLICANTS WHO SATISFY LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR CLAIMING IT. THE
10	ADMINISTRATOR AND THE ADMINISTRATOR'S AGENTS, CLERKS, AND
11	EMPLOYEES SHALL KEEP ALL INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM THE
12	EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CONFIDENTIAL, AND ANY INDIVIDUAL WHO FAILS TO
13	DO SO IS GUILTY OF A MISDEMEANOR AND SUBJECT TO PUNISHMENT AS
14	SPECIFIED IN SUBSECTION (6) OF THIS SECTION.
15	SECTION 7. Effective date. This act takes effect upon passage
16	except that sections 3 and 5 of this act take effect January 1, 2017.
17	SECTION 8. Safety clause. The general assembly hereby finds
18	determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate
19	preservation of the public peace, health, and safety.

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