



GEORGIA HOUSE BILL 581 OVERVIEW

What is Georgia's HB 581?

- Georgia HB 581 aims to provide homestead tax relief to homeowners across the state, not just Chatham County.
- HB 581 was passed by the Georgia Legislators in 2024 signed into law by Governor Kemp April 2024 and approved by voters on November 5, 2024.
- HB 581 is a statewide exemption that closely mirrors Chatham County's 1999 Stephens-Days Exemption.
- Local Governments must "opt out" of HB 581 by March 1, 2025.

What are Homestead Tax Exemptions?

- They help prevent large increasing property tax assessment due to growth and help control rapid increases in property assessments.
- **Homestead Exemption** – A legal provision that helps to reduce the amount of property taxes on owner-occupied homes. The home must be one's primary residence.
- **Stephens-Day Exemption** – A homestead exemption passed in a state local law for Chatham County residents only that equals the difference between the current year fair market value and the adjusted base year or base tax year.

Does Chatham County already have an exemption?

- Chatham County has the first Homestead Exemption ever passed in the state.
- Stephens-Day is a local homestead tax exemption in existence since 1999, widely considered the best in Georgia.
- Stephens-Day has been ligated, amended, and improved throughout its 25 years of existence.
- HB 581 is new and **may** require adjustments.

How will HB 581 impact my taxes or my base tax year?

- Opting in or out **will not** change your base tax year if you are currently under Stephens-Day.
- Base tax years only change when you sell, transfer, or improve your property.
- HB 581 states that in counties with multiple exemptions, **the taxpayer shall receive the one with the greatest tax reduction.**

Pros and Cons of Opting In or Out

Pros for Opting In

- HB 581 benefits property owners in counties that do not already have a Homestead Exemption
- Low risk because Georgia Law states that taxpayer shall receive the exemption that provides them the greatest benefit
- No major financial impact on City

Cons for Opting In

- Possibly inefficient spending of public funds (additional Chatham County staff time required to track new values)
- Potential confusion on exemption process and tax digest
- Complications and potential mistakes for Chatham County tax tracking software

What is the City of Pooler's position?

- We are still considering the best position for the City.
- We are aware of HB 92, which would give more time for consideration and discussion of HB 581 but has not yet passed.
- We are positioning our City to be able to opt out, although no official decision to do so has been made.
- The City is paying close attention to any information coming out of the county and the tax assessor's office about any additional potential impact of opting in or opting out.

For Chatham County homeowners with the Stephens-Day Exemption, HB 581 will not impact your property taxes because it already provides an as good as, or better, exemption. Opting in or out WILL NOT reset your base tax year value.