

## LEGISLATIVE BILL 419

Approved by the Governor March 14, 2001

Introduced by Wickersham, 49

AN ACT relating to the Tax Equalization and Review Commission; to amend section 77-5017, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, and section 77-5016, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2000; to change appeal provisions relating to exempt-status property; to repeal the original sections; and to declare an emergency.

Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

Section 1. Section 77-5016, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2000, is amended to read:

77-5016. All cases appealed to the commission shall be granted an informal hearing unless a formal hearing is granted as determined by the commission according to its rules and regulations. In cases appealed to the commission:

(1) The commission may admit and give probative effect to evidence which possesses probative value commonly accepted by reasonably prudent persons in the conduct of their affairs. It shall give effect to the rules of privilege recognized by law. It may exclude incompetent, irrelevant, immaterial, and unduly repetitious evidence. Any party to an appeal filed under section 77-5007 may request a formal hearing by delivering a written request to the commission not more than thirty days after the appeal is filed. The request shall include the requesting party's agreement to be liable for the payment of costs incurred and upon any appeal or review, including the cost of court reporting services which the requesting party shall procure for the hearing. The commission shall be bound by the rules of evidence applicable in district court in any formal hearing held by the commission. All costs of a formal hearing shall be paid by the party or parties against whom a final decision is rendered;

(2) The commission may administer oaths, issue subpoenas, compel the attendance of witnesses and the production of any papers, books, accounts, documents, statistical analysis, and testimony, and cause the depositions of witnesses residing either within or without the state to be taken in the manner prescribed by law for taking depositions in civil actions in the district court;

(3) All evidence including records and documents in the possession of the commission of which it desires to avail itself shall be offered and made a part of the record in the case. No other factual information or evidence shall be considered in the determination of the case. Documentary evidence may be received in the form of copies or excerpts or by incorporation by reference;

(4) Every party shall have the right of cross-examination of witnesses who testify and shall have the right to submit rebuttal evidence;

(5) The commission may take notice of judicially cognizable facts and in addition may take notice of general, technical, or scientific facts within its specialized knowledge or statistical information regarding general levels of assessment within a county or a class or subclass of property within a county and measures of central tendency within such county or classes or subclasses within such county which have been made known to the commission. Parties shall be notified either before or during the hearing or by reference in preliminary reports or otherwise of the material so noticed. They shall be afforded an opportunity to contest the facts so noticed. The commission may utilize its experience, technical competence, and specialized knowledge in the evaluation of the evidence presented to it;

(6) Any person testifying under oath at a hearing who knowingly and intentionally makes a false statement to the commission or its designee is guilty of perjury. For the purpose of this section, perjury is a Class I misdemeanor; ~~and~~

(7) The commission shall hear appeals and cross appeals taken under section 77-5007 as in equity and without a jury and determine de novo all questions raised before the county board of equalization or the Property Tax Administrator which relate to the liability of the property to assessment or the amount thereof. The commission shall affirm the action taken by the board or Property Tax Administrator unless evidence is adduced establishing that the action of the board or the Property Tax Administrator was unreasonable or arbitrary. Any decision rendered by the commission shall be certified to the parties and, if applicable, to the county treasurer and the official charged

with the duty of preparing the tax list. When such decision becomes final, any officials shall correct their records accordingly; and

(8) If the appeal concerns a decision by the county board of equalization that property is, in whole or in part, exempt from taxation, the decision to be rendered by the commission shall only determine the exemption status of the property. The decision shall not determine the taxable value of the property unless stipulated by the parties according to subsection (2) of section 77-5017.

Sec. 2. Section 77-5017, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is amended to read:

77-5017. (1) In resolving a contested case, the commission may make such orders as are appropriate for resolving the dispute but in no case shall the relief be excessive compared to the problems addressed. The commission may make prospective orders requiring changes in assessment practices which will improve assessment practices or affect the general level of assessment or the measures of central tendency in a positive way. If no other relief is adequate to resolve disputes, the commission may order a reappraisal of property within a county, an area within a county, or classes or subclasses of property within a county.

(2) In an appeal specified in subdivision (8) of section 77-5016 for which the commission determines exempt property to be taxable, the commission shall order the case returned to the county board of equalization to determine the taxable value of the property, unless the parties stipulate to such taxable value during the hearing before the commission. The order shall require the county board of equalization to (a) assess such property using procedures for assessing omitted property, (b) determine such taxable value within ninety days after the issuance of the commission's order, and (c) apply interest, but not penalty, to the taxable value as of the date the commission's order was issued or the date the taxes were delinquent, whichever is later.

(3) A determination of the taxable value of the property made by the county board of equalization pursuant to subsection (2) of this section may be appealed to the commission within thirty days after the board's decision.

Sec. 3. Original section 77-5017, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, and section 77-5016, Revised Statutes Supplement, 2000, are repealed.

Sec. 4. Since an emergency exists, this act takes effect when passed and approved according to law.