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NEWS RELEASE

HARRIS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT TO GRANT LARGER TAX EXEMPTION FOR SENIORS

*Exemption Will Mean No County Taxes
On Homesteads Valued At \$200,000 Or Less*

Harris County Commissioners Court is scheduled to adopt a proposal Tuesday that will increase the county's senior property tax exemption, resulting in smaller tax bills for thousands of homeowners 65 years of age or older and entirely eliminating tax bills for many others.

Court members agreed unanimously last year to increase the tax exemption for residence homesteads for disabled or senior taxpayers to \$160,000 from the current \$156,240. State law requires that court members approve the measure again in order for it to take effect this year.

Because the exemption can be combined with the standard 20 percent homestead property tax exemption, disabled taxpayers and those with an over-65 exemption will pay no Harris County taxes on homesteads assessed at \$200,000 or less.

"With property values skyrocketing throughout Harris County, the resulting property tax bills can be especially difficult for disabled and senior homeowners," said County Judge Ed Emmett. "Many of those homeowners are on fixed incomes and need help to ensure that larger and larger percentages of their income aren't being spent on taxes."

By passing the increased exemption this week, Commissioners Court will ensure that the new figures will be included in the "Residential Notices of Appraised Values" being mailed to property owners by the Harris County Appraisal District, beginning March 15.

Also on tomorrow's agenda, court members are scheduled for an executive session briefing on the status of a lawsuit against the county regarding the display of a Bible outside the 1910 Civil Courthouse. The agenda notes that the court also may take action on a possible settlement of the suit.

Commissioners Court will consider these and other issues when it meets at 10 a.m. Tuesday, March 4, in the Commissioners Courtroom on the ninth floor of the County Administration Building at 1001 Preston in downtown Houston.