

BEFORE THE TAX COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF IDAHO

In the Matter of the Protest of)	
)	DOCKET NO. 19740
[REDACTED],)	
)	DECISION
Petitioner.)	
_____)	

This case arises from a timely protest of a State Tax Commission staff decision to change the property tax reduction benefit for 2006. This matter was submitted for a decision based on the documents in the file. The State Tax Commission has reviewed the file and makes its decision.

[Redacted] (petitioner) filed a property tax reduction benefit application on March 17, 2006. During review of that application and the accompanying copy of the petitioner's 2005 federal income tax return, the staff identified nontaxable annuities that had not been included in the application. In addition, the staff noted the petitioner showed her social security at the net amount (after Medicare had been subtracted) but proceeded to reduce the income by medical expenses that included Medicare resulting in double credit for the expense of Medicare.

The staff sent the petitioner a letter advising her that her income total for the purpose of the property tax reduction benefit was going to be increased to include the nontaxable portion of the annuities and the adjustment for Medicare. The petitioner protested the intended action that would result in a \$200 reduction in the amount of her benefit.

All property within the jurisdiction of this state is subject to property tax. A property tax reduction benefit program is available to certain qualifying individuals throughout the state. The benefit is in the form of payment (either total or partial) of the applicant's property tax on the dwelling he/she owns and occupies. The payment is funded by state sales tax.

The amount of property tax reduction depends on income--the greater the income, the smaller the benefit. However, income is defined differently for the property tax reduction benefit program than it is described in the income tax code. Income for property tax reduction benefit purposes is defined in Idaho Code § 63-701(5):

(5) **"Income" means the sum of federal adjusted gross income** as defined in the Internal Revenue Code, as defined in section 63-3004, Idaho Code, and to the extent not already included in federal adjusted gross income:

(a) Alimony;

(b) Support money;

(c) Nontaxable strike benefits;

(d) **The nontaxable amount of any individual retirement account, pension or annuity,** (including railroad retirement benefits, all payments received under the federal social security act except the social security death benefit as specified in this subsection, state unemployment insurance laws, and veterans disability pensions and compensation, excluding any return of principal paid by the recipient of an annuity and excluding rollovers as provided in section 402 or 403 of the Internal Revenue Code);

(e) Nontaxable interest received from the federal government or any of its instrumentalities or a state government or any of its instrumentalities;

(f) Worker's compensation; and

(g) The gross amount of loss of earnings insurance.

It does not include gifts from nongovernmental sources or inheritances. To the extent not reimbursed, the cost of medical care as defined in section 213(d) of the Internal Revenue Code, incurred or paid by the claimant and, if married, the claimant's spouse, may be deducted from income. To the extent not reimbursed, personal funeral expenses, including prepaid funeral expenses and premiums on funeral insurance, of the claimant and claimant's spouse only, may be deducted from income up to an annual maximum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) per claim. "Income" does not include veterans disability pensions received by a person described in subsection (1)(e) who is a claimant or a claimant's spouse if the disability pension is received pursuant to a service-connected disability of a degree of forty percent (40%) or more. "Income" does not include dependency and indemnity compensation or death benefits paid to a person described in subsection (1) of this section by the United States department of veterans affairs and arising from a service-connected

death or disability. "Income" does not include lump sum death benefits made by the social security administration pursuant to 42 U.S.C. section 402(i). Documentation of medical expenses may be required by the county assessor, board of equalization and state tax commission in such form as the county assessor, board of equalization or state tax commission shall determine. "Income" shall be that received in the calendar year immediately preceding the year in which a claim is filed. Where a claimant and/or the claimant's spouse does not file a federal tax return, the claimant's and/or the claimant's spouse's federal adjusted gross income, for purposes of this section, shall be an income equivalent to federal adjusted gross income had the claimant and/or the claimant's spouse filed a federal tax return, as determined by the county assessor. The county assessor, board of equalization or state tax commission may require documentation of income in such form as each shall determine, including, but not limited to: copies of federal or state tax returns and any attachments thereto; and income reporting forms such as the W2 and 1099. (Emphasis added.)

The calculation of income starts with federal adjusted gross income and, thereafter, makes certain additions and deductions. The nontaxable portion of annuities is specifically required to be included in income to determine the benefit amount a qualified applicant is to receive. The only exception is if the annuities are determined to be qualified as “rollovers as provided in section 402 or 403 of the Internal Revenue Code.”

The petitioner’s federal income tax return and federal Form 1099-R showed she received gross distribution of annuities in the amount of \$7,584. Of that amount, \$5,560 was taxable and was included in her federal adjusted gross income. The petitioner complained about the inclusion of the nontaxable portion of the annuities in income.

The property tax reduction benefit is not federal or state income tax – it is payment of property tax based on certain qualifying factors including income. Pursuant to the definition of

income as stated in Idaho Code § 63-701(5), the nontaxable portion of annuities is required to be included in income to determine the benefit amount an applicant qualifies to receive.

In the present matter, the petitioner reported 2005 federal adjusted gross income of \$14,276 and social security income of \$13,668. Because the amount of social security did not include the cost of Medicare but the Medicare was subtracted as a medical expense, the amount of social security must be increased to reflect the petitioner's gross social security income of \$14,606.

When the \$2,024 nontaxable portion of the annuities is added to the federal adjusted gross income and the gross social security income and \$6,630 of out-of-pocket medical expenses are subtracted, the petitioner's total net 2005 income for the purpose of the property tax reduction benefit is \$24,276. The petitioner qualifies to receive a 2006 property tax reduction benefit of \$390.

The State Tax Commission is aware there is some potential this decision could cause a hardship to the property tax reduction benefit applicant. The proper jurisdiction to handle such hardship situations falls with the county commissioners pursuant to Idaho Code § 63-711.

WHEREFORE, the decision of the State Tax Commission staff to change the property tax reduction benefit is APPROVED, AFFIRMED, and MADE FINAL.

An explanation of the petitioner's right to appeal this decision is included with this decision.

DATED this _____ day of _____, 2006.

IDAHO STATE TAX COMMISSION

COMMISSIONER

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on this _____ day of _____, 2006, a copy of the within and foregoing DECISION was served by sending the same by United States mail, postage prepaid, in an envelope addressed to:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Receipt No.
