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Oregon Democrats Block Common-Sense Reform to Build More Affordable Housing Amid Crisis

SALEM, Ore. – Oregonians are facing a dire housing emergency with far too many families struggling to find an affordable home. Yet Democrat leaders in the Senate effectively killed a critical bill this week to combat that emergency.

Sponsored by **Senator Dick Anderson (R-Lincoln City)** and **Representative Vikki Breese-Iverson (R-Prineville)**, vice-chairs of the Senate and House Housing Committees, [Senate Bill 1566](#) would reduce construction costs by [10–20%](#) and stretch limited public dollars further by clarifying existing exemptions from prevailing wage requirements for privately owned affordable housing projects serving Oregon’s most vulnerable residents.

The bill aligns with the spirit of current law, which already exempts many such projects, but addresses confusing interpretations by the Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI) that have stalled or derailed fully funded developments.

“This inaction comes at a time when Oregon desperately needs more housing. Skyrocketing costs and ongoing housing emergencies have left working families and vulnerable populations with few options,” said **Senator Anderson**. “Prevailing wage mandates, while important for public infrastructure, should not unnecessarily burden private affordable housing efforts when every dollar counts.”

Senate Bill 1566 would unlock 1,300 units in the Eugene Waterfront area, enable the construction of housing for homeless veterans, and clarify that loans from public entities to private affordable housing projects are exempt from prevailing wage requirements.

“Oregonians always lose when politics is more important than people,” **Senate Republican Leader Bruce Starr (R-Dundee)** added. “Union leaders should spend their time being concerned about their members’ ability to find affordable places to live—not blocking reforms that would create more housing and more jobs.”

A [public hearing](#) was held on February 9, 2026, in the Senate Committee on Labor and Business. Despite a request to move the bill to the Senate Rules Committee for a potential floor vote, Democrat committee chairs have taken no action, and no further hearings have been scheduled.

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