



PRESS RELEASE

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House Votes Unanimously to Make it Easier for Local Jurisdictions to Develop Affordable Housing

SALEM – As communities across Oregon deal with housing crises, the Oregon House of Representatives today unanimously passed House Joint Resolution 201, a constitutional referral to Oregon voters that would make it easier for local jurisdictions to finance the costs of developing affordable housing.

Under current law, local jurisdictions can issue bonds to develop affordable housing. However, the Oregon constitution limits how these bonds can be used and prohibits jurisdictions from working directly with private and non-profit developers and from using common affordable housing financing tools to get the best value for building these affordable housing units. HJR 201 amends Article XI Section 9 of the Oregon constitution to allow counties and cities to finance the capital costs of building affordable housing units through the use of general obligation bonds.

“Every Oregonian deserves safe, affordable housing,” said Rep. Mark Meek (D-Oregon City) who joined Rep. Mike Nearman (R-Independence) in carrying HJR 201 on the floor. “It is no secret that there is a housing crisis in our state, and the costs of living are skyrocketing. People should not be forced to choose between paying their rent or affording other necessities like food and medicine.”

With the additional flexibility provided by HRJ 201, local jurisdictions can now ask their voters to approve general obligation bonds to build affordable housing most needed by local citizens.

“This referral will give communities the authority they need to address our housing crisis at the local level,” said Rep. Alissa Keny-Guyer (D-Portland), chair of the House Committee on Housing and Human Services. “Every Oregonian deserves access to safe, affordable housing, and if this measure is approved, it will make a difference in communities across our state.”

The joint resolution now goes to the Oregon Senate for consideration. If passed, the resolution becomes a ballot measure that voters can adopt in the next general election to amend the constitution.

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