



NEWS

Oregon Legislature - House Democratic Caucus

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Bill to help low-income seniors passes the House *HB 2489 improves program that helps elderly and disabled Oregonians keep their homes*

SALEM – A bill that will help many low-income seniors keep their homes passed the Oregon House today.

House Bill 2489 makes a number of important improvements to the Senior and Disabled Property Tax Deferral Program, which allows low-income seniors to defer their annual property taxes until they move, die, or sell their homes.

“I’m glad we’re taking action this session so we can continue providing this support for vulnerable seniors in Oregon,” House Majority Leader Val Hoyle (D – Eugene) said.

For decades, the Senior and Disabled Property Tax Deferral Program was both successful in its mission and financially solvent. But in recent years, the viability of the program was put into question as enrollment increased, housing values declined, and the economy worsened.

In 2011, the Oregon Legislature responded to the program’s lack of funds by passing an enrollment cap and stricter eligibility rules for the program. While these changes were necessary to keep the program afloat, many seniors and people with disabilities were consequently disqualified from the program.

House Bill 2489 would reinstate homeowners who were disqualified solely because they had reverse mortgages. Once enacted, HB 2489 is expected to help 1,400 senior citizens and disabled Oregonians re-enter the tax deferral program.

“Without the changes we’ve made since 2011, Oregon would have lost this important program altogether,” said Representative Phil Barnhart (D – Eugene), chair of the House Revenue Committee. “I’m proud of the ongoing efforts to keep this program solvent while also providing necessary property tax support for Oregonians.”

The bill passed the House 55-0 with five excused and now heads to the Senate.

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