



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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More Oregon Housing Will Suit All Physical Abilities Under Bill Passed by Oregon Senate Today

Many new housing developments shall include some units that are easy to enter and live in with wheelchairs, walkers, or communication technology

SALEM, OR – Oregon has more than 800,000 people age 65 and older, and people of any age can become disabled at any time. Oregon Democrats today passed a bill that will require new apartments and condos to have at least a few units that are easy to live in for everyone, including people who have trouble climbing stairs, reaching cupboards, or hearing doorbells, for example.

“One in eight Oregonians have mobility issues which make navigating multi-story housing difficult or impossible. In addition, affordability is a barrier for seniors on a fixed incomes and people with disabilities,” said **Senator Deb Patterson (D – Salem)**, chief sponsor of the measure. “Senate Bill 444 would move the needle on this critical need.”

Senate Bill 444 adds new accessibility standards to the state’s building code for new construction of multifamily developments, dormitories, and buildings with at least 15 units. Some of the units must have space for wheelchairs’ turning radiuses, lower shelving, lever-type door hardware, accessible thresholds, and lower kitchen workstations and lavatories.

The bill also requires any new development of rental housing subsidized by the state to have some units that are considered “visitable”—designed to accommodate people who have difficulty with steps or who use wheelchairs or walkers—and some that enable communication for people who are blind or Deaf.

“Oregon must continue to aggressively build housing that meets the needs of Oregonians at all ages, wages, and stages of life,” said **Senator Khanh Pham (D – Outer NE & SE Portland)**, chair of the **Senate Committee on Housing and Development**. “Senate Bill 444 will direct Oregon to build even more accessible places to live, ensuring that more Oregonians can call our state home.”

The Senate passed SB 444 in a vote of 18 to 11 and it now heads to the Oregon House for consideration.

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