



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Help for struggling senior homeowners passes the Senate

Oregon Senate approves HB 2489A, which provides certainty for low-income seniors and disabled Oregonians

SALEM—Today the Oregon Senate gave final legislative approval to HB 2489A, which provides direct relief to hundreds of seniors struggling to stay in their homes. The bill extends the ability to participate in the Senior and Disabled Property Tax Deferral Program to seniors who had been previously disqualified due to having a reverse mortgage.

“This extension of the Senior and Disabled Property Tax Deferral Program will help thousands of seniors who are at risk of losing their homes,” said Senator Ginny Burdick (D-Portland), chair of the Senate Finance and Revenue Committee. “What is most important today is that the changes we’ve made will keep this program up and running for our most vulnerable Oregonians.”

The Senior and Disabled Property Tax Deferral Program allows seniors and disabled individuals who have qualifying incomes and meet other criteria to defer county property taxes; the state is repaid when their homes are sold. Given the housing crisis of recent years and increased demand, the program was on the verge of insolvency until the Legislature made significant changes to protect the core of the program. While the changes maintained program solvency, those changes also created an unexpected hardship for some vulnerable homeowners.

“This is an incredibly valuable program to seniors in my district,” said Senator Alan Bates (D-Medford). “With so many Oregonians struggling due to the economic downturn, HB 2489A is an important piece of legislation that allows more seniors to live out the last years of their lives in a secure home.”

In 2012, the Legislature granted a two-year reprieve for those participants who were disqualified solely because of a reverse mortgage, meaning their next taxes would have been owed in November 2013. With passage of HB 2489A, these homeowners will have the security of continued eligibility for the program.

“Our communities become better places when seniors can stay in the homes they’ve built their lives around,” said Senate Majority Leader Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland). “Today’s vote gives these seniors struggling to stay in their homes the certainty that this program will be there to provide relief.”

HB 2489A will now go to Governor John A. Kitzhaber for his signature.

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