



# Oregon Senate Republicans

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PRESS RELEASE

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## **Senator Olsen Defends Disabled Veterans**

Today the Senate Finance and Revenue took up an important housing issue for veterans. Oregon has continually dealt with many housing issues and affordability for veterans. The most [recent presentation](#) by the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs, pointed out that there are approximately 1,251 homeless veterans in Oregon. That number could be even higher depending on how many veterans actually report to the VA. According to a [recent KGW report](#), the national average for homeless veterans is 18 out of 10,000, but Oregon's average is 43 out of every 10,000 veterans.

The issue of homelessness and how to deal with it in our state is of great concern to many citizens. Recently, the [Oregonian](#) cited a new poll of Portland-area voters where 33 percent of the respondents consider homelessness the biggest issue facing the city and region.

[SB 500](#), with bipartisan support from Senator Alan Olsen, R-Canby, and Senator James Manning Jr., D-Eugene, grants a higher property tax exemption for veterans with certain disabilities. It also grants a higher property tax exemption to the surviving spouse of a disabled veteran.

“When our country calls on our citizens to fight in wars, our heroes should never have to come back to a worse housing condition than when they left,” said Olsen. “Their widows should not have to struggle paying property taxes. The goal of SB 500 is to help alleviate property tax burdens and help them keep their homes. This is just one of many steps we can take to deal with this crisis.”

Senator Olsen pointed to the inequity over the years that has been created by not changing the property tax deduction to stay current.

For example, in 1975, the exemption in Oregon was \$7,500. More importantly, the average [home value in the United States](#) in January of 1975 was \$37,200. That is

approximately a 20% deduction if you were an Oregon veteran claiming the deduction in 1975.

In 2019 the current deduction for disabled veterans is \$15,000. According to [Zillow](#), the modern median price of homes sold in Oregon in 2019, is \$328,900. In other words, the property tax deduction for disabled veterans is now only 4.5%.

“We need to act as a legislature to make sure these deductions are current. There is no reason the legislature should leave a veteran behind by not keeping up with the changing times,” said Olsen.