

Submitter: Gary Sumrak
On Behalf Of: Gary and Janice Sumrak
Committee: House Committee On Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3249

Our Thoughts: The main problem with county property taxes is the effect of compounding interest over time. We have lived in our modest 3 bedroom - 2 bath 1860 sq ft home since November of 1993, which now puts it at 31 years. In that amount of time our property taxes have gone up over an additional \$2,000.00/year. I don't have access to our 1994 and 1995 property tax records, but they were \$1,846.85 in 1996 and now for 2024 are \$3,852.38. That translate into roughly a 2.5% annual increase. Here we have been living in the same house for 31 years and it appears we are being financially penalized for doing so, and if nothing changes the property tax increases due will only continue to get worse over time. Our guess is that there are several thousand other senior homeowners in our state suffering the same financial burdens who are quietly living their lives on the margin.

With that said, maybe a qualifying standard can be established whereby seniors 65 years old and over can receive some sort of property tax relief. A general financial qualifying status could be to use the 2024 Federal Poverty Level guideline, for a couple, with a fixed income under 200% of the annual poverty level of \$40,880.00. This could be a good starting point as a financial marker. Another qualifier could be for seniors that have lived at the same home for say 20 plus years and wants to be able to afford staying in their respective homes. Maybe one solution would be to freeze the property tax rate at the 20-year mark. That at least would be somewhat helpful. We would be grateful for your thoughts on this and any other standards that could possibly be applied.

As I stated in my LTE in the Rogue Valley Times newspaper, this clearly is a non-partisan issue. Are you willing and interested in working with Republican State Senator Daneil Bonham who introduced Senate Joint Resolution 202 last legislative session on this subject? His resolution would be a good starting point and more than likely will need several further clarifications. Worth noting, if this truly does become a state ballot measure, it would be up to Oregon voters to have the final say, as it should be.

Sincerely – Gary and Janice Sumrak, 2485 Pinebrook Circle, Medford, OR 97504