

March 03, 2025



Dear Chair Marsh, Vice Chair Anderson and Members of the Committee,

The Oregon Gerontological Association urges support of HB 3589. *This bill would require the Housing and Community Services Department to develop a senior housing development initiative funded through a transfer of funds from the Senior Property Tax Deferral Revolving Account.*

Who we are

OGA enhances knowledge and cultivates a network of all those involved in the field of aging to improve the lives of older adults and those who support them in Oregon and SW Washington. Our network enables service providers, policy makers, businesses, educators, researchers, students and others to share expertise and best practices to address challenging issues in order to create an age-friendly state.

The problem

Homelessness among our aging population has increased dramatically in recent years. We've seen estimates of homeless people in Oregon as high as 20K. Homeless populations increase at nearly 10% every year, according to the [Homeless Leadership Coalition](#). [Homelessness in Oregon](#) is a pressing issue that impacts thousands of individuals and families across the state. According to the latest reports, Oregon has one of the highest rates of homelessness in the United States in 2023.

At the same time, housing for the elderly has become more scarce and less affordable. "Preventing homelessness in the first place is the biggest upstream solution we have to this problem," Golino de Lovato, [Northwest Pilot Project](#) executive director said.

This bill is critical to housing for older adults, a population that is growing and experiencing homelessness at rates that are among the highest for all Oregonians.

As Oregon continues to grow older, we are witnessing a growing gap between social security payments and fair market rents. Older adults are among the fastest growing segment of our homeless population. Older adults represent the most vulnerable population that, when not supported appropriately, sink quickly into homelessness and become a bigger burden on the State of Oregon to protect them in an even

more vulnerable state. [Marisa Zapata](#), director of the Homelessness Research & Action Collaborative at Portland State University, said people are living longer and encountering more disability issues and more complicated issues around living alone.

- Planning now will prevent new populations of homelessness from becoming a huge burden on the city and state infrastructures and resources. Investment in the future of Oregon's aging population will pay off with healthy, active, productive lives.
- Oregon has long been a leader in supporting its senior population ([OR Senior Resources](#)). Advancing Oregon's leadership in welcoming and actively supporting senior Oregonians will ensure long-term prosperity for our great state of Oregon.
- This bill aligns with the Governor's Housing Production Strategy by utilizing existing funds to create more housing specifically for older adults. "[This is the decade of housing, this is what we are doing, and we are going to be relentless about housing](#)," she said.
- Seniors are an honored sector of our population: "[Oregon benefits when people of all ages, abilities and backgrounds are welcomed, included, and supported; and We recognize the need to create an Oregon that offers the services and supports older adults may need to make choices about how they age; and We are striving to build age-friendly communities for people ages 0 to 100+ who are included, engaged and can thrive...](#)"

Our future as senior citizens and as Oregonians depends on investments we make today...

Older Oregonians are valued members of our society. They have helped to create this great place we call home. Let's ensure their bright future by passing this bill unanimously.

Sincerely,

Steve Fritz, M.S., B.S.
Oregon Gerontological Association member
Member OGA Policy Committee