

Submitter: Angelita Sanchez
On Behalf Of: Sweet Home Residents
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SJR1

Rules Chair Jama and committee,

My name is Angelita Sanchez. I'm a city councilor in Sweet Home. This is my own opinion. I am asking for unanimous support of SJR1. This will give Oregonians a vote on a property tax freeze for seniors.

With skyrocketing costs across the board, seniors keep asking me "How can I afford another tax and fee increase?"

For many of them, cost-of-living adjustments don't keep up with the cost of living. Not only that, many are also widows and widowers, grandparents who care for grandkids, and seniors who continue working into their retirement. They should not have to place their property tax in a deferral program with 6% interest. It's unfair to tie up their equity when that are just trying to survive. They should however have a freeze on their assessed rate as a safety net.

This small freeze is one of many solutions we must consider, to proactively plan for our seniors. I am sure you are aware that the senior population, is growing five times faster than our country's total population. Additionally, they are the fastest growing population of homeless. And those homeless counts are anticipated to triple by 2030. We know the housing crisis in Oregon is dire. We know that Seniors' biggest priorities when considering where to age in place are split between access to medical care (59%) and housing costs (54%).

What are we doing to prevent their displacement from the homes they have worked so hard for, all these years? What are we doing to keep them in this state? What are we doing to bring them to this state? SJR1 can do something small but mighty.

This direct referral is also a cost avoidance measure that allows COLA increases to catch up over time, while avoiding additional cost burdens on the state and cities to provide housing and other services to seniors.

Yes, I am aware this may temporarily flatten property tax distributions to municipalities, however as I spoke to my assistant city manager about what this could do to our city, I believe it would minimally impact us but mean everything to Seniors. I know this would be a relief, even if its only a few hundred dollars a year.

My city has a permanent property tax rate of \$1.42 per 1000% of assessed value across all. This freeze is for assessment increases of seniors who are aging in home.

Once they sell, it is not transferrable. The new owners would bump back up to current assessed rates. If we as a city strategically plan for these freezes, we could potentially see a windfall of revenue at sale. Try to imagine the potential win/win here.

Reminder, this will not stop property tax assessment dollars. There would also still be a deferral program. It will not stop schools from being funded, it will not remove emergency services such as fire and police, it will simply give seniors a pause, allowing their COLA's to catch up and affording them to not become displaced members in our communities.

I strongly urge a yes vote. Thank you for the consideration.

Angelita Sanchez
City Councilor
Sweet Home