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Kennemer bill permits candidates to run for multiple unpaid offices

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State Rep. Bill Kennemer has introduced a bill that would allow candidates to run for more than one unpaid, special-district board in the same election.

Although it's relatively late in the 2013 Oregon Legislature's session, Kennemer, R-Oregon City, said the House Bill 3537 will get a hearing before the House Rules Committee, which is chaired by Rep. Chris Garrett, a Lake Oswego Democrat. Garrett has signed on as the bill's co-sponsor.

"I've also gotten quite a few signatures already," Kennemer said. "I'm told this bill may have a very good chance in the House."

Kennemer said he has lined up support from most House members who represent portions of Clackamas County, including Carolyn Tomei, D-Milwaukie; Julie Parish, R-West Linn; Shemia Fagan, D-Clackamas; and Brent Barton, D-Oregon City.

News of the bill was welcomed by Don Morgan, the Canby-area man whose name was erased from Clackamas County ballots after he filed for both the Canby Area Parks and Recreation District board and the Canby Fire District board. Morgan, 67, who retired from Clackamas County's risk-management staff, said he automatically filed for re-election to the parks board, then filed for the soon-to-be-vacant fire board seat just before the deadline, after friends urged him to toss his hat in the ring.

Soon afterward, however, the county's elections staff eliminated him from both races on advice from the Oregon Secretary of State's Office, which said Morgan had violated state law. Morgan was flabbergasted.

"I can see where you can't run for mayor Portland and governor of Oregon at the same time," he said. "But not the parks board and fire board. If there's no conflict of interest. What difference does it make?"

In an odd twist, Morgan finished second in the tally of write-in votes for the fire district board. Meanwhile, he won re-election to the parks and recreation district board.

"Well, good," Morgan said, sighing. "That's the one I really wanted, anyway."

-- Rick Bella