



## Deborah Kafoury Multnomah County Chair

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### Testimony of Chair Deborah Kafoury

As Chair for the Multnomah County Board of Commissioners, I support HB 2083 and the proposed amendments.

HB 2083 supports older adults being able to age in place in their communities. Oregon is nationally known for enabling older adults a variety of care options that allow them to remain in their homes and connected to their communities. Almost 50% of individuals receiving Medicaid Long-Term Services & Supports receive their care in their home. Maintaining older adults in their homes helps them to utilize their resources more effectively and avoid or postpone the need for public assistance.

A significant challenge for people remaining at home as their care needs increase is having an affordable housing option. As older adults on fixed incomes age the costs of home ownership can become a bigger portion of their limited incomes. The changes proposed by HB 2083 are important to ensure that older adults who are at higher risk financially have access to the Senior Property Tax Deferral Program.

We also ask that you support that amendment to the bill that would require the Department of Revenue (DOR) to contact the appropriate Aging & Disability Resource Connections (ADRCs) for any current applicant who fails to re-enroll, giving the ADRC 90 days to assist the applicant before removing them from the program. Examples of supports that can be provided by local ADRCs include:

- Assistance with the DOR application process for older adults experiencing barriers due to cognition, literacy issues, low vision or low hearing;
- Assistance accessing financial counseling and money management assistance;
- Information, referral and assistance to access other public benefits they may be eligible for, such as SNAP, utility assistance, energy assistance, etc.; and
- Assistance accessing additional support services, such as senior nutrition services, transportation services, in-home care, family caregiver supports, etc.

I strongly urge you to pass HB 2083 and the proposed amendments.