



March 9, 2015

To: House Committee On Revenue

Fr: Elders in Action

Re: HB 2083

The Elders in Action Commission is a senior advocacy council that advises the City of Portland, Multnomah County and Multnomah County Aging, Disabilities and Veterans Services on issues affecting older adults in Multnomah County. As such, we support affordable, high quality health care, housing, nutrition and transportation services for older adults and adults with disabilities.

The Elders in Action Commission enthusiastically supports the passage of HB 2083, modifying the eligibility criteria for the homestead property tax deferral program. The Senior & Disabled Property Tax Deferral Program is a critical tool in allowing older adults to remain in their homes and live independently. Unfortunately, during the recent economic downturn the program has been modified to such an extent that many who previously used the program have become ineligible.

Elders in Action supports the following program changes proposed in HB 2083:

- Waiving the five-year residency requirement for those previously enrolled in the program but who downsize their homes;
- Allowing the purchase of fire and other casualty insurance for properties without such insurance and adding that expense to the deferred loan amount;
- Adjusting the real market value limitations to better reflect the rapid increases in values that have occurred in certain communities; and
- Repealing the prohibition on homes with reverse mortgages.

Older adults in Multnomah County, as in all areas of the state, are being forced to leave their homes due to financial hardships related to taxes, utility costs and other financial burdens. With these proposed changes, the Property Tax Deferral program could allow hundreds of older adults to “age in place” in their homes.

We urge you to pass this important piece of legislation.