

# Ballot eases rules for aged, disabled

By Brad Berton  
Of the Emerald

Oregonians soon will be asked whether elderly persons with low incomes and handicapped persons should be eligible for the state's current multifamily housing project for the low-income elderly.

The current law provides multifamily housing financed through state bond sales only for low-income elderly persons, but Ballot Measure 2 — if approved in the May 18 primary — would extend coverage to elderly persons with higher incomes and to the handicapped.

And because the current law doesn't allow individuals to obtain loans from the bond funds to finance individual units, the measure also will help the elderly purchase the housing units constructed under the project.

The measure provides that the combined debt for financing these programs will not increase the state constitution's current debt limit.

About 1,000 Oregonians signed a petition to include an argument by Ralston Smith, chairperson of the Committee for Elderly and Handicapped Housing, in the voters' pamphlet.

"Passage of the measure would have a positive impact on the Oregon economy by providing financing for reasonably priced housing for the elderly and disabled," Smith writes.

Only \$23 million of the state bonding authority total of \$412 million has been used, and the measure does not increase the bonding limit, nor does it increase taxes, he writes.

Smith says the measure "expands the program to allow



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housing for our severely handicapped citizens who require group living arrangements" and allows "eligible elderly persons to buy a unit in a cooperative or condominium apartment building or a mobile home in a mobile home park."

A similar argument, signed by 472 petitioners and funded by the McTeague for Congress Committee, also will appear in the voters' pamphlet.

McTeague, a University political science graduate and Congressional candidate, argues that Ballot Measure 2 "will provide increased capital for housing" and asks Oregonians to "help our housing industry and the thousands of Oregonians out of work in construction work and lumber mills."

No arguments opposing the measure were filed with the secretary of state's office.

Kent Gorham, of Eugene's Elderly and Handicapped commissions, says the measure "is a recognition of needs that seniors and disabled face in the state when it comes to housing."

While other housing is available, the measure recognizes that everyone desires to be independent homeowner, and recognition of the measure by legislature shows support for the measure, he says.

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