



# The Capitol Granger

*Weekly news from your Grange lobbyist*

## A successful Grange Legislative Day at the Capitol, and Senate Bill 181

by Craig Loughridge  
Assistant Director for Governmental Affairs

Welcome to issue #2 of the Oregon State Grange's government affairs newsletter, the place where I take a stab at updating you on key happenings at the capitol. My starting during a legislative session that's half over will make this a challenge, so I welcome feedback and questions in the coming weeks.

My stint as your lobbyist started April 18 at the Grange's Legislative Day at the Capitol. Legislative



Director Mark Noah organized a successful event, and 20 to 30 Grangers from around the state came to

exchange information, to learn about the business of the legislature, and to learn how they can help make more of an impact.

Attendees received copies of legislative policies that the State Grange adopted in 2016 along with tips on how best to communicate with legislators. They watched voting sessions in the Senate, and in the House of Representatives. They learned about tools for finding information about their legislators, and about legislation that has been proposed.

Sen. Betsy Johnson (D-Scappoose) met personally with Grangers to talk about major issues. Naturally, the state budget and taxes were high on her list. However, Johnson also told Grangers about a threat

from Senate Bill 181, which the Senate passed March 21. The bill would require subordinate Granges and many other charitable groups statewide to file extra paperwork with county assessors every year in order to keep property tax exemptions.

Johnson called the bill "bad," and said the Grange might stop it by lobbying House members. The bill now sits in the House Revenue Committee, where Rep. Phil Barnhart (D-Eugene) is the chair, and has the power to prevent it from being scheduled for a hearing. Bills must get a committee hearing to move to the full house for a vote.

The Grange and other nonprofits have been sending letters and emails to Barnhart and other representatives in an effort to stop the bill. They note that the bill duplicates information requirements of other agencies, and creates an undue burden that could cause some already-cash-strapped Granges to close.

Another bill of note is SB 1038, which got a hearing in the Senate, but never passed out of committee. The bill would have required all high school students to pass a civics test in order to graduate.

Please contact me if you have comments or questions about these bills or others that the Grange is following. I am at: [govaffairs@orange.org](mailto:govaffairs@orange.org).

