



# The Capitol Granger

*Weekly news from your Grange lobbyist*

## **Grange pressure helping stall anti-charity tax bill. More needed now.**

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A bill intended to ferret out evil charities and strip away their property tax exemptions could be faltering. Nonprofits throughout the state have been fighting the bill over fears it would harm a lot more than just charities who may not fulfill their charitable purpose.

Senate Bill 181 still sat with the House Committee on Revenue on Wednesday night after having been sent back from the full House earlier this month for potential changes. Still, the bill could be near passage.

Committee Chair Phil Barnhart, whose district takes in large parts of rural Lane and Linn counties, brought the bill into two committee work sessions this week, and lobbied fellow committee members to support the bill. He went so far as to say that he thought the Nonprofit Association of Oregon now supported the bill because of changes that a committee member added.

However, NAO representatives confirmed in conversations Tuesday and Wednesday that the association continues to oppose the bill, despite the amendments. NAO says the changes don't do nearly enough to make the bill salvageable.

The only substantial change was the addition of language requiring a 30-day notice before canceling the property tax exemption of a nonprofit that gave false information. If a nonprofit gave correct information that resulted in cancellation of its exemption, or if it simply forgot to file, the assessor wouldn't need to notify the organization to cancel.

The main threat of SB 181 to the Oregon State Grange is the bill's potential impact on local Granges across Oregon. Three bill supporters, including

Barnhart, said the bill's language excludes fraternal organizations like the Grange, and applies only to registered charities. However, after they learned many Granges also are registered as public charities, they refused to adjust the language to clearly eliminate them.

The bill does specifically exclude several narrow classes of very large nonprofits. Because it wasn't excluded, the nonprofit Oregon Public Broadcasting on Tuesday asked legislators for new language to exclude only OPB. (It's unclear how the committee will respond.)

Whether a large nonprofit like OPB or a small nonprofit like the Grange, the bill's current provisions will harm charitable organizations of all types and sizes.

You and your Grange are making an impact on legislators. The more we speak up now, the more chance we have to win amendments later if the bill does pass.

If you already contacted the representatives for your Grange's area, please do so again. Call their offices if you can. Send a follow-up email. Because the end of the legislative session is nearing, votes now are happening on short notice. Legislators who don't see your email will hear about your call, and vice versa.

Please let your representatives know that recent changes to SB 181 don't help your Grange. Remind them of the important work your Grange does, and that other charities in your community do.

*Use this link to contact your representative:*

[www.oregonlegislature.gov/FindYourLegislator/leg-districts.html](http://www.oregonlegislature.gov/FindYourLegislator/leg-districts.html)