



## **Oregon REALTORS® Win Fight to Preserve Mortgage Interest Deduction –Sept. 2013**

It was as if the Oregon legislature hadn't heard the voice of the people. During its 2012 General Election, the Oregon Association of REALTORS® (OAR) had led the charge that amended the state's constitution to prohibit real estate transfer taxes. Yet, this year, despite projections showing an estimated \$2 billion in new revenue, OAR found itself keeping a careful watch on no fewer than 10 different legislative proposals that threatened Oregonians' itemized deductions – including mortgage interest and property taxes – amounting to a \$275 million tax increase.

“We were armed with momentum,” comments Paul Rainey, Director of Public Policy for the 12,500-member association. “Finding Oregon homeowners in the cross-hairs again, we were able to build on the success of last year's ballot measure to leverage our position.” Rainey had worked closely with the Campaign Services staff and consultants at the NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS® the year before, when they helped OAR to build [www.ProtectOregonHomes.com](http://www.ProtectOregonHomes.com), a platform for housing legislation information and advocacy that proved highly effective in fighting real estate transfer taxes.

When OAR recognized the impending threat to the mortgage interest and property tax deductions surfacing in the legislature this spring, Rainey contacted NAR again, and worked with the Campaign Services team to put together an Issues Mobilization Grant proposal worth \$90,000. They hit the ground running with patch-through phone calls to targeted districts, generating upwards of 750 phone calls from concerned voters to their legislators. They launched a consumer Call for Action, and a REALTORS® Call for Action, maximizing the power of the ProtectOregonHomes.com site. NAR consultants helped to craft a press release revealing that one proposal being floated in the House included a Film and Video tax credit, which would eliminate the mortgage interest deduction in favor of tax breaks for Hollywood film studios looking to shoot in Oregon. Early in April, OAR focused its annual REALTOR® Rally on saving the property deductions, bringing more than 500 members to the state Capitol to get their message through to legislators.

Before OAR had expended the second half of its grant from NAR, the first threatening bill was defeated in the House. Bolstered by good feedback from its contacts in the Senate about how a subsequent bill was likely to fare, OAR continued to monitor the situation closely without using the second installment of \$45,000 from NAR. In the end, the tax plan that was passed left the mortgage interest and property tax deductions intact.

“Thanks in large part to the support of NAR, we were able to be politically aggressive, and put legislators on notice that we have the power to take issues like these directly to the voters,” says Rainey. “We've made it clear that with our access to data and campaign expertise, REALTORS® have the ability to get effective messaging to the people, and that, as REALTORS®, we are determined to protect the value of Oregon homes, and the values of Oregon's homeowners.”



To learn more about how the Oregon REALTORS® have been fighting for fair property legislation, contact Paul Rainey, Director of Public Policy for the Oregon Association of REALTORS®, at [prainey@oregonrealtors.org](mailto:prainey@oregonrealtors.org) or 503.362.3645.



Oregon REALTORS® bring more than 500 members to the State Capitol to Tell Lawmakers to Preserve Real Estate Tax Provisions, Including the Mortgage Interest Deduction



Above: Oregon Association of REALTORS® President Eva Sanders, President Elect Bob McClung and Chair of Professional Development, Robin Risley pose for a photo with colleagues and State Representative Debbie Boone during the 2013 REALTOR® Rally at the Capitol.



Right: Overhead View of Rally at the Capitol