

## HCR 1001

**Summary:** This Resolution will simply extend the benefits of the senior property tax exemption to seniors who already qualify for the exemption but have to move because of a disability.

### **Poverty and Seniors**

Poverty Rates for seniors in the US and CO remain unacceptably high. Most seniors live on a fixed income. The rise of living expenses and healthcare costs means that a loss of even \$25-50 a month has great consequences for a senior. That amount of money means loss of medicine, a utility bill, or nutritious food.

AARP says that about 1 in 10 seniors struggle with poverty; This means that almost 10% of seniors 65 and older live in poverty. About 70% of this demographic are women (Older Americans in Poverty pg. 14). Seniors in this category are also far more likely to suffer from disabilities (pg. 36).

### **Low Income Seniors and Housing**

Surprisingly, over 50% of low-income seniors own their own homes but struggle to maintain them on fixed income (40). Seniors that are independent and stay in their own home cost the state system less in healthcare/housing costs while maintaining personal dignity.

Under current law, the senior property tax exemption in the state Constitution allows seniors a tax break on 50% of the value of a home, up to \$200,000 of its value, if they are 65 years of age and have owned their home for ten years.

This equates to an average amount of \$550 a year in cost savings. For seniors who live in poverty, this is a significant amount of money, especially if they suffer from increased medical costs due to a disability.

This resolution is written for the seniors who are forced to sell their current residence because of health reasons; i.e., a 70 year old senior who has a two story home but can no longer go upstairs because of a hip-replacement and must sell his or her home and buy a one level house. Currently, he or she would no longer qualify for the exemption because he or she did not own the one floor house for ten years, even though he or she owned the 2 story house for 15 years.

**This resolution is necessary to address the needs of seniors who are most deserving of the exemption.**

For Future Reference:

“Older Americans in Poverty”, AARP <http://assets.aarp.org/rgcenter/ppi/econ-sec/2010-03-poverty.pdf>

For addition resources on seniors, please contact Rep. Scott’s office or Leg. Services

**Table 1**  
**Colorado Seniors 65 and Older Below the Poverty Level**

2011	Below Poverty Level <sup>a</sup>
65-74 years old	21,037
75+ years old	21,922
<b>Total</b>	<b>42,959</b>
<b>Percent of Total Seniors 65 and older</b>	<b>8%</b>

*Source: 2011 U.S. Census American Community Survey; Prepared by Legislative Council Staff.*  
*<sup>a</sup>Total seniors 65 and older below the poverty level is not a subset of seniors who own and occupy their home. It is unknown how many seniors below the poverty level actually own and occupy their place of living.*

**Table 2**  
**Colorado Seniors 65 and Older Who Own and Occupy Their Home**

2011	Owner Occupied
65-74 years old	160,824
75+ years old	119,944
<b>Total</b>	<b>280,768</b>
<b>Percent of Total Seniors 65 and older</b>	<b>52%</b>

*Source: 2011 U.S. Census American Community Survey; Prepared by Legislative Council Staff.*