

# 'Homeowners' Bill of Rights' legislation passes Assembly, Senate

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Both houses of the Legislature this afternoon OK'd two bills that backers say look to protect personal property rights and reduce regulatory burdens surrounding owning a home.

The legislation, dubbed the "Homeowners' Bill of Rights," passed on separate voice votes in the Assembly. One bill cleared the Senate on a voice vote, though some Dems raised concerns about usurping local control, while the other was approved 25-8. The bills now head to the gov for consideration.

Under the first bill, AB 479, local governments would be prohibited from requiring property owners to merge adjacent lots owned by the same individual, running counter to a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision that upheld St. Croix County's lot-merger ordinance.

It also puts in place a framework for granting conditional use permits, as well as a number of other provisions.

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Meanwhile, AB 480 would give property owners who didn't allow an assessor to view their property challenge the assessment, as well as prohibit assessors from increasing their assessment of an owner's property just because they were refused entry to the owner's home — in an effort, according to backers, to protect owners' Fourth Amendment rights.

The legislation follows a state Supreme Court ruling this summer that those who refuse to allow assessors inside their home to then be barred from having a hearing to contest their assessment.