

07 June 2021

To: Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue

Re: House Bill 2008

Dear Chair Senator Burdick, Vice-Chair Senator Boquist, and members of the Committee:

I realize House Bill 2008 is progressing handily through the legislative process and will undoubtedly be passed into law. Nevertheless I am voicing my opposition to it.

The lines between separation of church and state are blurred. There is a number of so-called *faith-based* organizations advocating, promoting and sponsoring legislative actions of one sort or another that affect all Oregon citizens. These religious organizations combine active advocacy for or against political issues and legislative policies having nothing to do with their respective "faiths". The real issue is moola. No spirit stuff involved.

HB 2008 would grant "tax exemptions for property of religious organization held or used solely to provide affordable housing to low income households". What does their religious belief have to do with this civic duty to pay their fair share for municipal services? The taxes they are exempted from will undoubtedly be made up by others. County tax collectors are not going to roll over on this one and suffer a loss of revenue. To make up the difference every other property owner's taxes will increase.

I understand some church property has been exempt from property tax for quite some time. Property used for housing is a bird of a different feather. The only exemptions for us mom & pop rental property owners has been to be exempt from our private property rights.

Rental property owners who also provide low income housing are penalized while so-called religious organization get a property tax exemption. What happened to all the hoopla about *equity*? Legislators dole out exemptions to "religious" organizations for no other reason than they profess a belief in a spiritual power of some sort.

Sincerely,


Richard Wisner