

Dear Oregon House Committee on Human Services,

I am beside myself with disbelief at the possibility of Oregon legislatures voting for a sales tax. I moved to Portland, Oregon as a 10-year-old child in 1983 and have watched this state slowly become California (which is not a good thing). With the recent passing of Portland Mayor Bud Clark, I long for the days with common sense legislators that cared about this city and state. Legislators that cared about hard working Oregonians and made it an affordable place to live. My first studio apartment I paid \$325/month in 1993. With the value of a dollar, I should be able to find the same studio for \$638.55/month, but that exact studio starts at \$985/month today. I have a 22-year-old daughter who is college educated and struggles to find affordable housing, even with roommates and a full-time job in her career.

In Multnomah County, the average tax rate for property owners is \$20.12 per \$1,000 of assessed value, but the average US homeowner is taxed \$9.87 per \$1,000 of real market value. I am single and can barely afford the American dream of owning my home. I pay so much in property taxes yet Oregon schools rank in the bottom fifth nationally, No. 40 in performance ranking. We are 2 slots behind New York for spending but at least New York is No. 12 in Public School Ranking, using their dollars more appropriately. California No. 37 and Hawaii No. 31.

Portland, Oregon is the worst City for stolen vehicles with 487 vehicles per 100,000 people stolen per year. This MLK day my exhaust system was cut out of my SUV while in a store for 10 minutes. I know law SB 803 passed that gives a \$1000 fine to scrap metal businesses if they buy catalytic converters or their components unless from a commercial seller or vehicle owner, but who is regulating that? Obviously, there is still a market or it wouldn't still be happening.

Oregon State Government is the 4<sup>th</sup> fattest and 4<sup>th</sup> biggest state spending state government in the US behind Hawaii, New York and California. This is on top of the billion-dollar surplus the state stashed into a slush fund last year. Why can't the slush fund be used for stipend to low-income families? Don't we have enough social programs to fund? Why do we need another?  
**WE DON'T!**

Government spending DOES NOT cure poverty! Word will spread, like it has for Oregon's homeless resources. It will attract people who do not need it, those from out of state, just like other Oregon benefits have done. The Atlantic Magazine called Oregon a "Welfare Utopia". Oregon is famous nationwide for our welfare benefits. This is overwhelming our social services and our charities and is forcing government to raise taxes even higher. Again, Government spending does not cure poverty. Poverty is erased by economic opportunity either born of individual initiative, or work opportunities afforded from business. This statist mentality is ruining Oregon.

**WHAT ARE WE GETTING FOR OUR HARD-EARNED MONEY YOU TAKE IN TAXES?**

I am a Physician Assistant and have worked in Family Practice for almost 15 years. I have worked in clinics that were called "candy stores" because they did not have rules and regulations surrounding controlled substance prescriptions. Word of mouth would get out in the community and more and more people that were drug seekers would come to the clinic, even from out of

state. Government funded monthly stipends to low-income families will mirror this. Now Portland has become a homeless haven with drugs and crime becoming a daily occurrence in my neighborhood. If you need something to throw money at to make yourselves feel better, fund Mental Health. Go to High Schools, State Colleges and Universities and encourage students to become Psychiatrist, Psych NP/PA's, LCSW's, BHC's and counselors by giving them free tuition. We need to build a better, healthier Oregon.

Instead of Oregon Freedom Pilot Program in Department of Human Services to provide monthly stipends to low-income families through a sales tax, how about we build the programs that are already in place. Don't reinvent the wheel, just make it operate better. Oregon has dozens and dozens of financial aid and assistance programs. From OHP, OPDP, Operation Round Up, FHIAP, TANF, Mortgage Assistance, HUD, Section 8, telephone assistance, Legal Aid, Homeless Prevention through Oregon eviction help, Food Bank, Oregon Agency on Aging, Free Community Clinics, Oregon Free Dental Centers, Job Search and Employee Development, Energy Bill help, Oregon Rental Assistance and many more.

Instead of raising new punishing taxes on local small business goods and their customers, why not first remove the special corporate welfare it affords to large companies and Hollywood companies who film in Oregon? Those entitled industries get tens of millions of Oregon tax dollars for special tax breaks. Overtaxing one group of businesses while lavishing tax breaks to another is unfair.

Oregonians spend so much already in taxes and get no return. If this 3% sales tax passes, then 10% will be passed next year. Eventually those of us that are funding your frivolous spending will be forced to move out of the state we love. I want to retire here but I can't see a way I can afford to do that. If this bill is passed, I will be forced to move to a more affordable state. Portlanders will flock to Vancouver. This state will no longer tax me to the point of strife.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'M' followed by a series of loops and a trailing line.