

Submitter: Joon Ae Haworth-Kaufka  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Human Services  
Measure: HB4079

People are concerned about taxes. I get it. I am a registered Independent, a small business owner, and I work with small businesses. Small businesses are getting hammered in this state, and especially Portland, that claims to be so small business friendly (sooo much red tape!). I am furious about our bureaucracy and waste and the way government gets in the way of movement. I was so frustrated last week, I had a stroke a couple weeks about business taxes. The main reason I pay someone to do my taxes is because I don't want to pay a cent more in taxes than I have to.

BUT, this is a completely different thing. This is a minimal tax on luxury items -- very expensive, elitist luxury items that most people can't afford. Those who can afford these recreational boats, planes, and insanely expensive jewelry can handle a 3% tax to support foster kids who have transitioned out and literally have NO FAMILY. Where are people's hearts? Let's get these people on their feet, get them out of the system quickly with a little bit of a foundation, and get integrate them into society where they can contribute to our communities in ways that make them feel good and ways that help society.

Please remember that this is not a blanket sales tax because, nope, I'm not cool with that either. This is a very SPECIFIC bill targeting upper class, elite purchases in a way that would help a very narrow demographic of our most vulnerable people: low income moms and foster kids who have no family support.

I have three kids, and they are so lucky to be raised in a household with parents who are very intense about teaching them how to save and manage their money. They get small allowances, and we require them to save some, donate some, and spend freely what is theirs. We talk about credit cards and interest rates.

Foster kids don't have these basic things that other kids have. They don't have allowances. They don't have families who can loan them \$500 bucks when their car breaks down. They don't have people to help pay for their community college tuition, and books and school fees, for a professional license, let alone the insane expense of university tuition. They don't have parents to help them pay rent if they get sick and have to take a week off work -- or to bring them soup and check on them. They don't have anyone to help them save for a down payment on a small home, a wedding, a new (used) car. They don't have family to help them with vet bills when they have to take their animal to the emergency vet in the middle of the night and end up with a thousand dollar bill. Shit happens -- all the time. Anyone who lives on the edge of just making it knows how hard it is to pull yourself out of just one emergency. It can take

years. (I just talked to a small business owner with no support system who lost her business when she fell and broke her hip. It has taken her five years to reopen her business.)

Can we please not argue about supporting foster youth who have aged out of the system?

I am a middle-class person, and I have worked my butt off my entire life. Currently, I am a middle-aged person. I work 50-70 hours per week, and this is the first year of my life that I have a little savings and have pulled out of debt. I'm just a regular person, doing my thing, working hard, trying to be a good human and care for my community. This bill does not hurt people like me. If I was wealthy enough to afford boats, planes, fancy jewelry, and recreation vehicles, I would be happy to pay 3% to this specific target group. Of course, I would.