

Submitter: Franco Ortega
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Ways and Means
Measure: SB5506

Dear Joint Ways & Means Committee of Oregon,

The Co-Chairs Budget Framework currently leaves out critical community-led investments and policies that Oregonians need now. With roughly \$2B in reserves, this is no time for budget cuts.

I urge you to fully fund the People's Budget. Responding to the needs of communities across the state, this plan lays out key investments to advance immigrant justice, address the housing crisis, fix Oregon's broken public defense system, make childcare accessible and affordable, address climate justice, and fund other urgent needs to strengthen Oregon's communities. The longer we ignore the challenges we face, the more it will cost to address them.

Our state's economic recovery is tenuous, and we need our state's leaders to invest in our future. While it is important that we maintain adequate reserves, we must also address the urgent needs of our communities. The good news is that Oregon's rainy day fund is large enough that we can do both. Strategic investments today will help ensure all of us are equipped to navigate the uncertainty ahead and lay a foundation for economic growth and shared prosperity.

We must learn from the harmful mistakes of the past. We know that austerity measures slow economic growth and disproportionately impact Black people, Indigenous people, and People of Color; immigrants; LGBTQ+ people, women, and working families.

Thank you for coming to communities across Oregon with the Ways and Means Budget Roadshow. Like all Oregonians, we are still recovering from the economic impacts of the pandemic and inflation is making it harder for our families to afford groceries, pay bills, and make rent. It is important that our voices are included in the state budget process.

I call on you to fully fund the People's Budget to support widespread economic opportunity for all Oregonians and advance gender, racial, and economic justice in our state.

Sincerely,
Franco Ortega