

Please reject HJR 201.

Oregonians are suffering under an ever-increasing burden of taxes, from high income taxes to oppressive property taxes to the ill-conceived CAT tax, which though billed as a business tax, is paid by everyone who purchases anything made or grown or distributed in Oregon. The property tax limitations passed in the 1990s expressed taxpayers' distress at property taxes spiraling out of control and pricing middle and lower income Oregonians out of home ownership. Oregon voters said a resounding NO to property taxes without limitations. And Oregon voters are saying NO once again to legislative attempts to create new taxes.

This bill purposefully excludes this proposed new property tax from the constitutional tax limitations passed by voters in the 1990s. Not only that, but it fails to describe exactly what the new tax money would be spent on. This new tax would not be limited to fully funding living wages, protective equipment, and essential training for our law enforcement and fire-fighting professionals, as a reasonable person might think when reading the catchline—"for funding public safety in this state." Could this money be used to pay legal fees for the massive numbers of people flowing across the Southern border? Could it be used to fight INS efforts to deport criminal illegal aliens? Could it be funneled to "community organizers" with salaries much higher than those of our hard-working public safety professionals who put their lives on the line for Oregonians every day? Could it be used to fund lawsuits attempting to remove 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment rights of Oregonians?

We cannot continue to tax people out of their homes. Potential first-time home buyers are working multiple jobs, trying to save for a down payment, yet getting farther and farther behind as inflation eats up their savings and pushes home prices higher and higher. Adding another property tax to the cost of home ownership would derail their efforts, and many, especially the younger taxpayers who have little reason to stay, would take their talents, their work ethic, and their tax dollars to other states.

This additional property tax would also force people living on fixed incomes, including senior citizens, out of the homes they worked a lifetime to own. Many are falling behind with inflationary pressures on their retirement savings. This bill would also force landlords to raise rents, further straining the budgets of those without the means to save for their own home. It would increase our colossal rates of homelessness and drive more Oregonians into the despair of living in their cars or under bridges.

As our representatives in state government, please listen to the voices of Oregonians. NO NEW TAXES! Vote a resounding NO on HJR 201.