We have an issue of despondency in Oregonians that our local government is not seeing in our young adults, in our working class, in our parents and in our retired. They all have different problems that they face and all have to do with making ends meet. People in those demographics are trying to be responsible and do what's asked of them but with mortgage interest rates through the roof, the high cost of living, high income tax and the already high property tax, then the HJR 201 proposal asking for more money in the form of higher property taxes that can go up randomly and without warning depending on who is in office and what someone deems under the ambiguous term of "public safety", you're talking about people's breaking points. It's also disingenuous to act like everyone who owns homes, pays a mortgage or is trying to qualify for a mortgage to own a home are somehow making tons of money or are wealthy and that they should be the ones to pay even more. We've heard a lot about a housing crisis and the need for more housing yet it seems perfectly okay to our government to make it unaffordable to own and keep a home by straining homeowners with high property taxes along with high income taxes.

The idea behind HJR 201 amending the Oregon Constitution requiring the Legislative Assembly to enact a state property tax to fund public safety by increasing property taxes and having unilateral control over all counties to essentially bail out measure 110's failure along with other policies that didn't work, is wrong. What happens in the future when a host of new problems crop up or a new governor or attorney general decides something falls under "public safety" and the taxes sky rocket again and again? What about counties far away, who have nothing to do with the specific problems primarily found in our cities-their voices are collectively written out.

For the past 3 years tax paying, law abiding citizens have seen a two tier system emerge, one of rights and responsibilities. All of the responsibilities seem to be going to those who pay taxes, follow the law, work or own a small business and all of the rights seem to be going to drug addicts, drug dealers, criminals and certain politicians who want to keep this going without financial accounting and transparency. Oregonians can be complacent and passive when it comes to local politics but we're not blind to the hypocrisy. When Companies, businesses, large employers and the wealthy leave the city or state, like they already have begun to, we no longer have their tax revenue coming in and working class Oregonians who are not well off end up paying for everything, including things with high price tags and dismal results. This is an untenable situation.

As far as one of our main public safety issues goes, it's fairly simple. When you have

lax drug laws and not enough enforcement of the law or prosecution of crime, you attract drug dealing and criminal behavior and the longer you continue lax law and order the more drug dealers and criminals catch wind of it and your city and state becomes a bigger hub for criminal activity. Criminals, drug addicts, drug dealers, drug cartels, human traffickers etc… seek places easiest to do business in and we have made it very easy. No amount of taxes or federal grants is going to fix what common sense will fix. There's a reason cities have to be tough on drugs and crime and it has nothing to do with liberal or conservative ideals, the reason is because it will snowball out of anyone's control otherwise.

When you have high taxes but poor results it's not about the money fixing the problems, it's about better ideas, listening, transparency and accountability. It doesn't make sense to make and enact policies for a world we don't live in. There is an aspect of humility that has to apply when an idea isn't working and it's not the end of the world to say certain things aren't working and change direction.

Thank you for your consideration,
Maryliz Herron