

June 11, 2025

Subject: Strong Opposition to HB 2025 and the Proposed \$1 Billion Tax Increase

As an Oregon resident, I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB 2025 and the proposed \$1 billion tax increase. This legislation is fundamentally out of touch with the economic reality that Oregonians face daily. Our residents are already burdened well beyond the national average, and additional taxation is both unjustified and irresponsible.

Consider the following:

1. The cost of living in Oregon is 7% above the national average.
2. Housing costs are a staggering 41% higher than the national average.
3. Oregon ranks **#1 in the nation** for rates of unsheltered families and children.
4. We are **the 8th most expensive state** for groceries.
5. **1 in 7 Oregonians** are facing hunger that is **3% higher than pre-pandemic levels**.
6. **17% of our population** relies on SNAP benefits.
7. Our income tax system is one of the **most regressive** in the country. Low-income Oregonians pay **12% the highest rate of any state** for that income bracket.
8. According to Monster.com, Oregon has the **second highest income tax for middle-income earners**, just behind California.
9. MIT defines the middle class as earning \$83,000 annually; by that measure, **over 48% of Oregon households** are too poor to be considered middle class.

If the state insists on imposing such a steep cost of living and high taxes, residents should reasonably expect a return on that investment. Unfortunately, Oregon ranks near the bottom in several critical areas of quality of life:

- **45th in education**
- **40th in employment**
- **35th in ROI on educational investment**
- **39th worst for retirement**
- **42nd in affordability**
- **32nd in quality of life**
- **26th in healthcare**

(Source: WalletHub)

Where is the value in what we are paying for?

The mental and emotional toll on our population is evident in Oregon's mental health and crime statistics:

26th in the nation for overall crime

Surging violent crime, including murder rates **double the national average**

High rates of drug and alcohol addiction, yet **last in recovery access**

Among the worst states for **drunk driving incidents and fatalities**

25th in incarceration

Among the highest in **anxiety and depression prescriptions**

Consistently **above average suicide rates**

These are not signs of a thriving state. These are warning lights on the dashboard, flashing red and instead of easing the burden, HB 2025 proposes to make it heavier.

Legislators are elected to serve, protect, and uplift their constituents. A tax increase of this scale, in light of Oregon's poor return on public spending, does not reflect service it reflects abandonment. It does not offer value it deepens despair.

I urge you to vote **NO** on HB 2025. Oregonians are already stretched too thin. Now is the time to relieve their burden, not increase it.

Heather Hayes

Albany, OR