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On Behalf Of:

Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation Reinvestment

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB2025

As an Oregonian for all 37 years of my life, I strongly oppose HB2025. Ever since I was a little child and all the way into early adulthood, my parents always encouraged me to save money. After graduating high school and getting my first job, I started to learn more about the taxes coming out of my paycheck each month. As I started to take on the responsibilities of life, I quickly realized that what was inside my paycheck versus the necessities I needed every day to survive I was either out of money or running in the negative. I had to learn how to budget. Now 20+ years later with a career, my pay has increased quite a bit since that first job but so has the cost of food, utilities, gas for my car, insurance both for vehicle and health, and the exponential increase in rent, etc. It seems rare that our wages keep up with those increases. Right now over 28% of each paycheck I receive I am paying taxes. And over the last few years, our politicians have continued to increase or add more taxes which makes the cost of living in Oregon even more difficult. That idea of my parents telling me to save as much money as I could is almost impossible. How can I save money each month when there is nothing left after covering just the basic necessities to live each day.

Every month I budget for my rent, my utilities, my transportation, groceries, my healthcare and medication. God forbid if there's some sort of an emergency that comes up. I have to make cuts all the time for things that would bring joy to my life. I can't do those things anymore because I have to budget my money to live. What I don't understand is why our politicians want to increase or add more taxes that's going to cost us taxpayers a considerable amount more each year when we are already struggling to make ends meet. ODOT for instance, says that they are going to have a major short fall in money needed to keep up with our roads. Instead of drastically increasing our taxes or adding more taxes to what we already have, why are you not instead budgeting their money like the rest of us? Why is their spending not being scrutinized and the information being provided to the public on where all the money that they already receive is going?

Most of us are struggling. We don't have the luxury to reach our hands directly into other people's wallet and take the money for ourselves, that would be theft. Instead of putting this on a ballot for Oregonians to vote on, we are being bypassed and told we will be losing more of our money because the state can't/won't budget and be more responsible with money it has. Instead it's reaching directly into my wallet and taking money from me without asking. We've yet to see full accounting of the spending on ODOT from all of our prior taxes. Why can't ODOT work within its budget?

In the last 10+ years I can't recall a single time when our taxes decreased to a noticeable level to provide relief. I'll say that part again, I can't think of a time when gas, groceries, health insurance, medication, household goods, rent, etc has decreased to a noticeable level compared to the exponential number of new taxes and increases we've experienced this decade. This bill wants to increase our gas tax when Oregon has one of the highest gas prices in the country. I thought our gas tax and vehicle registrations etc was supposed to pay for our roads?

I have so many friends and family that have moved out of Oregon over the last couple years and I have watched many businesses close and move out as well. Our elected officials are taxing and regulating us to death and we've gotten to a point where it's no longer sustainable to live here. I am strongly opposed to this bill, and I am strongly opposed to watching more of the people and businesses around me leave the state because of it. It's time that the State of Oregon lives within their budget. If we are forced to do it then the state certainly can too.

Thank you.