

Submitter:

Heetan Patel

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB4148

Dear Legislators, I OPPOSE the measure to increase the statewide lodging tax for reasons that are obvious to anyone who lives in the state. Whether you're a business operator or a customer, no one wants to pay more to support bad spending habits. The residents of our state are OVER-taxed as it currently stands. Our affordability is low. How much tax is enough? (Property tax, income tax, payroll tax, CAT tax, business licenses, Tri-met tax, Metro housing tax, paid leave tax, gas tax, vehicle tax, etc.)

The City of Portland discovered surpluses of over \$106 million exist. How can that not be considered a derelict lack of accountability? Similarly, it is time for our lawmakers to be fiscally responsible instead of riding on the backs of hard working Oregonians to carry this burden of continually raising taxes. Learn how to balance budgets like the rest of us have to do in our own households. Learn how to save money & make it stretch further like we must do. Do more with less. Come up with solutions that involve solutions other than raising taxes. If a layman can do it, so can legislators, who signed up for the position to represent us, rather than misrepresenting us at every turn.

Aside from taxes, Oregonian's cost of living has increased through monopolies; groceries, gas, electricity, garbage, water, & sewer rates.

Lodging tax is meant to support putting "heads in beds". Lodging tax should not be collected & applied to use for anything that does not support that cause. It is unfair to target the lodging industry to help support gaps in general funding.

The City of Sandy doubled their lodging tax without engaging in a dialogue with the only hotel located within the City limits, & it is frustrating given the hotel holds membership with the Sandy Visitor's Bureau & the Sandy Chamber of Commerce.

We were not asked to provide input for this proposal & we discovered it after the increase was adopted. We lost a tremendous amount of bookings, revenue & travelers as a result to the tune of a 30% decline. These tourists would have spent locally in surrounding businesses providing a positive economic impact which is lost. Oregon & Portland already have negative reputations in the national headlines with homelessness, drugs, filth & lawlessness. Just look at the economic impact of real estate valuations in Portland with offices having declined in value by over \$2 billion. All of these tax increases are putting businesses out of business.

Small businesses will not survive on onerous policies to hike taxes & increase business costs. Business operators have a tremendous amount of responsibility to their landlords, lenders, employees, customers, & communities. Operators must ensure they are in compliance with laws, have adequate staffing, oversee purchasing, inventory management, billing, bookkeeping, accounting, HR, recruitment, training, legal, payroll, marketing, etc. It can cause mental health issues

for business owners because there's so much to juggle. Some feel better off leaving their business to go work for someone else or to leave the state & relocate businesses elsewhere where their hard work is praised. Business ownership is no longer commensurate with the risk and rewards for our time, effort & stress. Help businesses thrive instead of taking time away to defend ourselves from unnecessary tax hikes & the increased cost of doing business. The so-called solutions that are being advertised cause undue pain & suffering for all & result in a worse business climate. The willingness to do business in Oregon is dwindling & we are all simply working in order to survive the storm.

References:

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