



To: Senate Committee on Finance & Revenue  
Re: Senate Bill 1511  
On: February 11, 2026

Chair Broadman, Vice-Chair McLane, members of the committee,

I am submitting this testimony in opposition to the current approach to amending Senate Bill 1511.

I appreciate the intent behind this bill and this conversation. I am aware that there is pressure on this building to “do something” about Oregon’s estate tax, including competing efforts to entirely eradicate it. There has also been much media coverage about the notion that Oregon is, “the most expensive place to die,” and that wealthy families are leaving the state as a result. I am sure we could spend hours just debating the merits of that argument and whether there’s any actual data to back those claims up. I’m not going to do that in this testimony, but I do want to provide a different perspective.

Oregon’s current estate tax, according to analysis by the Oregon Center for Public Policy, impacts only 5% of Oregon estates. Put differently 95% of Oregon estates will pay no tax at all. This matters because most Oregonians – including I would expect a majority of the people I represent – are not concerned about the estate tax. They are concerned about putting food on their table, paying their rent, being able to afford to take their kids to the doctor, and whether they’ll be able to afford to retire or find a homecare worker as they age. These are the very tangible issues my members are looking to Legislators to address this session.

Why is this relevant to this conversation? Because our estate tax is an important part of Oregon’s overall state revenue mix that funds our budget and the essential services that many of the 95% of Oregonians who don’t pay this tax rely on. So any change must weigh the aims of benefits to the 5% who DO pay it, against the impacts to our budget, especially at a time when wealth inequality is near an all-time high and the gap between the wealthiest Oregonians and the poorest is growing.

Given all of that - While the current -3 amendment has provisions that we are supportive of – such as raising the rates on the largest estates in Oregon – and others that we are neutral on – such as raising the tax threshold to \$2.5 million – we do not support the indexing of the estate tax threshold in tax years 2029 and beyond as currently drafted. We believe the proposal would be strengthened by including a cap for the index, which is an approach that the Legislature has taken in other cases when indexing to inflation.

Thank you,

Courtney Graham  
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SEIU Local 503

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