

Submitter: Paul S
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SJR201

I respectfully oppose Senate Joint Resolution 201.

My opposition is not rooted in a lack of support for public education or wildfire prevention. Both are essential priorities for Oregon. My concern is about governance, fiscal discipline, and accountability.

The personal kicker exists as a constitutional safeguard to ensure the state does not permanently retain revenue beyond what was projected and budgeted. It reflects a deliberate choice by voters to limit over-collection and return excess funds to taxpayers. Redirecting half of those funds, once they exceed a threshold, weakens that safeguard.

If education and wildfire funding are core, structural priorities, they should be addressed transparently within the standard budgeting process. Stable, recurring obligations should not rely on unpredictable windfall revenue. Doing so risks creating dependency on surplus years rather than encouraging long-term planning and reform.

Additionally, this proposal does not include structural reforms, measurable performance standards, or accountability mechanisms tied to the redirected funds. Before retaining surplus taxpayer dollars, the state should demonstrate that existing resources are being deployed efficiently and that clear outcome benchmarks are in place.

Automatic earmarks can reduce scrutiny and dilute legislative debate over tradeoffs. Oregon taxpayers deserve confidence not only that their money is spent on worthy causes, but that it is spent effectively and transparently.

If reforms to improve educational outcomes and wildfire prevention systems were included — along with strict reporting requirements and performance auditing — this conversation would look different. But as written, this measure reallocates funds without addressing systemic efficiency or accountability concerns.

For these reasons, I urge you to oppose Senate Joint Resolution 201.

Thank you for your consideration.