



American Association of University Professors

Academic Freedom for a Free Society

February 18, 2026

Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

RE: SJR 201 and -1 amendment - Support

Chair Broadman, Vice-Chair McLane, and members of the Committee,

For the record, my name is Victor Reyes, and I am the Executive Director of AAUP Oregon.

On behalf of the more than 3,000 members of the American Association of University Professors in Oregon, our collective bargaining chapters at the University of Oregon, Portland State University, Oregon State University, and Oregon Institute of Technology, and our faculty members in advocacy chapters across Oregon, we urge you to support SJR 201 with the -1 amendment.

Prior to the passage of HR1 (the “Big Beautiful Bill”) in 2025, the budget crisis faced in our state has been a self-created problem caused by the Oregon kicker, which in the past decade has caused our state to return \$11 billion in much-needed revenue that could have been used to fully fund education, healthcare and other needs in our state. If passed by our legislature and approved by voters this November, SJR 201 will have a long lasting positive impact on the lives of all Oregonians by ensuring that a portion of those funds be devoted to providing additional funding for both education and the funding of wildfire prevention and suppression.

This additional support is sorely needed to help Oregon catch up to the national average in state funding for higher education, as we are *currently 45th in the nation for public university funding and 38th in the nation for funding higher education as a whole*. This anemic state support has fueled the affordability crisis in Oregon’s higher education system, leading to higher tuition, more reliance on student loans, and fewer faculty and staff to support student success. With the passage of SJR 201, we can more

aggressively attack these problems for the benefit of all Oregonians, both urban and rural.

While opponents of this bill may argue that any reform to the Oregon Kicker will deprive hard-working, low-income Oregonians of funds that they rely on, the reality is that much like our tax system, the kicker is a regressive policy that benefits the wealthy at the cost of the working class. According to the Oregon Center for Public Policy, 62% of the \$11 billion in state revenue returned to Oregonians through the kicker has gone to the richest 1% of Oregonians. With an average income of about \$1.1 million, these wealthy individuals get a kicker payment of about \$12,856. Meanwhile, the typical Oregonian, who makes about \$39,000, get a kicker worth about \$312. Given this inequitable reality, more Oregonians will benefit from the establishment of a fund to contend with state emergencies than from these funds flowing back into the accounts of the top 1% of earners.

Therefore, we call on you to help our state head off future crises by passing SJR 201 with the -1 amendment.

Thank you for your consideration.

Victor Reyes
Executive Director, AAUP Oregon