

Submitter: June Saragosa
On Behalf Of: Myself
Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SJR201

I oppose SJR 201 “Proposing an amendment to the Oregon Constitution relating to surplus revenue.” I was born and raised in American Samoa, graduated from the University of Hilo, Hawaii, in 2016 with a BA in Marine Biology. In 2021, we moved to Oregon to be closer to my in-laws. It was important to me that my children grow up connected to both my family and their father’s side. We have a six-year-old son who is currently in first grade. When he finished preschool in public school, we made the decision to homeschool him. This choice was driven by several factors, but one of the most significant was our desire for our children to receive an education rather than be subjected to indoctrination.

We often hear the phrase, "Children are the future of our state, country, and nation." Yet, when you consider the numbers—around \$19,400 spent per student annually through state, federal, and local funding (with state taxes contributing a major share)—an 83% graduation rate across Oregon still comes with some of the lowest academic proficiency rankings in the nation. What kind of future can we expect with statistics like these? It’s difficult to reconcile such high spending with such poor outcomes. Schools should be places where students are nurtured and grow through knowledge—not institutions that push ideologies.

Instead, what I see are students skipping classes to march in protests against ICE agents under the banner of “exercising freedom of speech.” Yet, many of these young people seem uninformed about immigration policies and the complexities involved. I say this with frustration because I come from an immigrant family, one that followed legal and moral paths to enter this country. Watching this unfold while also witnessing educators and teachers' unions prioritizing fearmongering over genuine education is deeply disheartening.

If there were ever a bill to defund public schools, I would support it. Oregonians placed their trust in you as elected officials, and I do not want my hard-earned tax dollars—our surplus revenue—going towards schools or colleges that don’t prioritize true learning. If eliminating funding for schools means ending DEI programs and affirmative action initiatives in these institutions, so be it. That’s why we oppose SJR 201.

There’s a Samoan proverb that holds deep meaning for me: “O le toe ta e mau ai le fao.” It means “the last blow sets the nail.” With this in mind, I leave you with these words in the hopes they remain firmly planted in your hearts and minds as I reiterate a portion of my testimony last week against the referendum SB 1599: Oregon does

not have a funding problem; Oregon has a budgeting and mismanagement problem. It's time to step up, take responsibility, and allocate resources where they are truly needed. Please, do right by the people you are supposedly serve.