

Submitter: Benjamin Roche

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SJR201

Chair and Members of the Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue,

I submit this testimony in firm opposition to any proposal that would divert or repurpose funds from Oregon's constitutionally protected surplus, commonly known as the "Kicker."

The Kicker is not an accounting error. It is not an unexpected windfall for government to redirect at will. It is a constitutional safeguard approved by Oregon voters to ensure fiscal discipline and to return excess revenue to the taxpayers and businesses who generated it.

Every Oregon family and every Oregon business operates within a budget. When revenue exceeds expectations, that surplus belongs to the household or business that earned it. State government is no different. The Oregon Constitution requires a balanced budget. It does not authorize the Legislature to redefine a surplus as an opportunity for expanded spending.

If forecasts are inaccurate or spending outpaces sustainable growth, the solution is better budgeting and stronger fiscal restraint, not retroactively changing the rules when the numbers come in higher than expected.

The Kicker exists precisely to prevent this kind of temptation. It enforces discipline. It protects taxpayers. It builds trust.

I respectfully urge this committee to uphold the constitutional intent of the Kicker, protect the surplus, and address budget challenges through responsible spending decisions rather than shifting the burden back onto Oregonians who are already managing rising costs in nearly every aspect of daily life.

Honor the Constitution. Protect the Kicker. Fix the budget without moving the goalposts.

Thank you for your consideration.