

Submitter: Renee Dodge

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Finance and Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SJR201

I am writing in strong opposition to SJR 201. While constitutional amendments can serve important purposes, this proposal raises significant concerns about long-term impacts, unintended consequences, and the broader implications for Oregon residents.

First, SJR 201 proposes changes to the Oregon Constitution rather than addressing concerns through statutory reform. Constitutional amendments are permanent and far more difficult to amend or correct if problems arise. Embedding policy into the Constitution removes flexibility from future legislators and voters to respond to evolving circumstances and fiscal realities.

Second, this measure may create legal ambiguity and increase litigation. When constitutional language is broadly written or lacks precise implementation standards, courts — rather than elected representatives — often end up determining how it is applied. This shifts policymaking power away from the legislative process and into the judicial system.

Third, the potential fiscal impact must be carefully considered. Constitutional mandates can create significant and ongoing financial obligations for the state. Without clearly identified funding mechanisms, SJR 201 could strain Oregon's budget, potentially impacting essential services such as public safety, behavioral health treatment, education, and infrastructure.

Additionally, this proposal may not reflect the diverse perspectives and priorities of communities across Oregon. Constitutional amendments should be used sparingly and only when there is clear, broad consensus. In this case, many Oregonians have legitimate concerns about how this measure would function in practice.

Rather than moving forward with a permanent constitutional change, the Legislature should consider alternative policy solutions that allow for careful evaluation, measurable outcomes, and adjustments over time.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge lawmakers to oppose SJR 201 and seek more balanced, flexible solutions that protect both the rights and the fiscal stability of Oregon and its residents.

Thank you for your consideration.