

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

My name is Tera and I am here in opposition to the proposal to redirect Oregon's kicker funds away from taxpayers and into K-12 education and wildfire prevention.

The kicker is not extra money sitting idly in a vault. It is a constitutional promise to the people of Oregon. When revenue exceeds projections by more than two percent, the excess is returned to taxpayers. That is not a loophole. It is a safeguard. It is accountability in action.

For many families, the kicker is not symbolic. It helps cover rent increases, groceries, childcare, car repairs, and rising utility bills. In a time when inflation has squeezed households from every direction, that refund can be the difference between catching up and falling behind.

K-12 education and wildfire prevention are serious, urgent priorities. But they deserve stable, transparent, long term funding solutions, not one time revenue surpluses that fluctuate with economic cycles. Using unpredictable surplus dollars for ongoing program costs creates uncertainty and weakens budgeting discipline.

If the state believes the kicker structure needs to change, that conversation belongs with the voters. The people of Oregon approved the kicker. Altering its purpose without their consent undermines public trust.

We can support schools. We can address wildfire prevention. But we should not do so by dissolving a constitutional commitment to taxpayers whenever revenue exceeds expectations.

I urge you to uphold the integrity of the kicker and return surplus funds to the people as promised.