

Testimony against SJR 201

Chair and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am here to express strong opposition to SJR 201.

SJR 201 proposes redirecting revenues from the people's **kicker** to fund wildfire programs and education. While these are important priorities, this measure fundamentally undermines the purpose of the kicker and ignores the reality of Oregon's current spending patterns.

Over the last four years, **education funding has reached historic highs**.

- In the **2023–2025** biennium, the Legislature allocated **\$10.2 billion** to K–12 education.
- For **2025–2027**, that number increased again to **\$11.36 billion**—another record.

Despite these unprecedented investments, **public school enrollment has steadily declined for the past five years**. Families are leaving the system, not because of a lack of funding, but because the system is not meeting their needs. Pouring more money into a structure that continues to lose students does not solve the underlying issues.

The kicker exists for a reason: **to ensure the Legislature lives within its means** and returns excess revenue to the taxpayers who earned it. Redirecting the kicker is not fiscal responsibility—it is an attempt to bypass the guardrails voters put in place to protect themselves from government overspending.

Once again, Oregonians are being asked to give up their kicker so the state can avoid making hard budget decisions. And once again, we must say **no**.

I urge you to respect the will of the voters, uphold the purpose of the kicker, and reject SJR 201. It is time for the Legislature to prioritize, make disciplined choices, and operate within the record resources it already has.

Thank you.

David Lewin, Portland, OR