

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

I strongly oppose SJR 201 and any effort to alter Oregon's voter-approved kicker system.

The kicker exists for a reason. It is a constitutional safeguard designed to return excess revenue to the taxpayers and businesses who earned it. When the state collects more than it projected, that surplus belongs to the people of Oregon — not the government.

SJR 201 represents yet another attempt to redirect kicker funds away from taxpayers and toward state-selected programs. While education, community colleges, and wildfire prevention are important priorities, they should be funded through responsible budgeting within existing revenue streams — not by rewriting constitutional protections that voters have repeatedly supported.

Oregon already ranks among the highest states in per-capita spending. Over the past 25 years, state government growth has consistently outpaced population growth and inflation. Rather than seeking new ways to retain surplus revenue, lawmakers should focus on fiscal discipline, prioritization, and living within established means — just as Oregon families and small businesses are required to do.

Altering the kicker undermines public trust. It signals that when revenues exceed expectations, the solution is not better forecasting or smarter budgeting, but changing the rules to keep more money in government hands. That approach erodes confidence in leadership and in the constitutional safeguards designed to protect taxpayers.

If additional funding is necessary for education, wildfire prevention, or other critical services, those conversations should occur transparently through the normal budgeting process — not by dismantling a voter-approved mechanism intended to protect Oregonians.

I urge you to stand with taxpayers, respect the will of the voters, and preserve the integrity of the kicker system.

Please oppose SJR 201.