



MEASURE: HB 2110  
EXHIBIT: Y  
HOUSE REVENUE COMMITTEE  
DATE: 3/24/2011 PAGES: 1  
SUBMITTED BY: JOHN MULLIN

***Taking action for basic human needs.***

Representative Phil Barnhart, Co-Chair  
Representative Vicki Berger, Co-Chair  
House Revenue Committee  
March 24, 2011

Re: HB 2110, HB 2231, HB 2533, – Cigarette and tobacco tax bills

The Human Services Coalition of Oregon (HSCO) has spoken before the House and Senate revenue committees numerous times. We usually begin with our revenue principles, adopted about 20 years ago. These principles are: "Fairness, Adequacy, and Stability." This session we also added "Transparency."

HSCO takes positions based on our mission and values, along with a review of precedence and scope. We are committed to help decision makers understand the impact of budget and revenue decisions. Toward that end, we are pleased to have the opportunity to submit this written testimony today.

We have consistently supported higher cigarette and tobacco taxes. This has not been a position arrived at lightly. It is common knowledge that the income distribution of smokers skews toward lower income people. Raising taxes on smokers is regressive. However, we have discussed the significant individual health ramifications of smoking, as well as the societal costs. We have come to the conclusion, long ago, that taxes on consumption of products that carry these individual and societal risks are appropriate.

Today, we simply wanted to register our continuing support for increasing the tax on cigarettes and tobacco products.

Some people will quit because of an increase. Some will cut back. Experts will testify today about how these taxes can affect behavior and save and improve lives for many. The revenue raised can be put to good use by matching for federal Medicaid dollars, and putting those matched funds into health and long term care services.

As we await the release of the Ways and Means Co-Chairs' budget, we know that very substantial cuts will be proposed. While these modest taxes cannot solve the budget problem, prudent consideration of additional revenue is an urgent issue this session.

Thank you for your consideration.

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Cc: Representatives Jules Bailey, Co-Vice Chair, Katie Eyre Brewer, Co-Vice Chair. Cliff Bentz, Sara Gelser, Tobias Read, Matt Wand

*The Human Services Coalition of Oregon (HSCO) is comprised of organizations and individuals from across the state who are committed to protecting and strengthening human services on which vulnerable Oregonians depend.*



MEASURE: HB 2231  
EXHIBIT: Y  
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DATE: 3/24/2011 PAGES: 1  
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