

BETTY KOMP
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 22



MEASURE: SB 349
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Testimony before the Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue
March 11, 2011

In Support of Senate Bill 349

Thank you Chair Burdick and members of the committee, for the record I am Representative Betty Komp of House District 22, which includes the cities of Woodburn, Gervais and North Salem.

I come before you today in support of SB 349 which increases the Earned Income Tax Credit. I am here not just as a legislator, but as an Oregonian whose life has been greatly impacted by economic hardship. As a child I grew up with thirteen brothers and sisters on a small dairy farm. Although my siblings hate when I use the word poverty, it is the most accurate way to describe our less than ideal circumstance.

It is the same circumstance far too many families in Oregon are experiencing every day. As a young single mother with four daughters my life was full of blessings, but once again lacking luxury, we only lived with the basics of life. I was a full time student, worked part time and had a taxable income of \$7,000 my sophomore year of college. Every penny that came in the door was highly valued.

I received Pell Grants and State aid to assist in paying for my education, but every single month I struggled to find ways to pay for groceries and the utility bill, let alone the prom dress my daughter was asking for. I worked extra shifts at work, I took on extra responsibility and in 1987 I filled out my taxes and realized I qualified for an earned income tax credit.

Colleagues, I know that when we sit and debate about hundreds of millions of dollars every day, a small amount like \$200 or \$400 seems insignificant. But for hard working families like mine, that are working for low wages and struggling to afford basic necessities a few hundred dollars can change lives.

SB 349 is about fairness, it is about protecting our families and during these incredibly difficult economic times, it is *necessary*. I respectfully ask for your support.

Thank you for your time today.