



Chair Burdick and members of the Senate Finance and Revenue Committee,

Stand for Children is a statewide organization that unites parents, teachers, and community members to be a powerful voice for children and excellent public schools. This letter is to express our tentative support for SJR 202.

Education is underfunded at all levels. K-12 students face some of the largest class sizes and shortest school years in the nation. Unstable funding exacerbates these challenges by hampering effective school district planning.

We need strong, smart leadership with a fierce sense of urgency to tackle these challenges head on. We greatly appreciate Sen. Morse, Sen. Burdick, Rep. Barnhart, and Rep. Berger for being the Chief Sponsors of SJR 202.

There are a number of things that are very promising about the kicker reform proposal in SJR 202. First, it would base the kicker off of actual economic growth, not off of a 2-year estimate of anticipated revenue collection. We'd love to have no kicker. But we prefer a smarter kicker to our current system.

In addition, SJR 202 prioritizes savings before a kicker. If the state collects more revenue than expected based on a 6-year rolling average of economic growth, unexpected revenue would first go into an Emergency Reserve Fund. Only once that reserve fund was full would we have a kicker.

We strongly encourage the committee and legislative leadership to complete a thorough review of this proposal so that the potential impacts of SJR 202 are understood under a variety of scenarios. It is also worth determining whether this legislation could pass muster with voters without a strong yes or no campaign. Legislative referrals have an excellent history of success with voters when they're technical and have broad support or neutrality.

We know that SJR 202 does not address the inadequacy of school funding. Please keep working on that problem as well. Nonetheless, this is a very promising step toward more stable, responsible funding of public schools and other critical services. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Dana Hepper
Advocacy Director
Oregon Stand for Children