

March 1, 2013

Chair Burdick
Finance and Revenue Committee
Oregon State Senate

Re: SB 326 Extends sunset for earned income tax credit.

Chair Burdick, Vice-Chair George and members of the committee thank you for your time and all of the work you do.

My name is Jessica Stewart, I am a resident of Portland, and I am speaking to you today on behalf of the Oregon Center for Christian Voices. Oregon Center for Christian Voices unites Christians in Oregon to seek God's justice. We base our personal and public values on the life of Jesus Christ as taught to us in the Bible and advocate for policies which reflect Christ's care for the poor, oppressed and the most vulnerable. We are a small nonprofit working to educate Christians around issues of Justice and Economic Fairness. I am not an expert in budgets and tax credits. Those experts are here, but I do want to speak on the moral aspects of EITC. I am here today to ask that you extend the sunset for the earned income tax credit. The federal government is cutting back as we speak; this committee must ensure that, at a minimum Oregon does not add to the misery of our working poor.

As Christians, we believe the moral measure of our economy is how well our poor and vulnerable neighbors are faring. We believe that God has called us to treat all people with equity and to speak up for the poor and needy. Proverbs 31:8-9 says, "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy." We all have a responsibility to speak up for those that are in need and to make just decisions. Extending EITC is a moral and just decision.

Governor Kitzhaber has included extending and increasing EITC in his budget. We believe that extending the sunset for earned income tax credit and strengthening the credit is good for Oregon and the moral thing to do. Please consider the Governor's budget proposal and extend the sunset and strengthen the credit.

President Reagan understood the dignity of work and the creation of EITC is proof of that. He said, "The Earned Income Tax Credit is the best anti-poverty, the best pro-family, the best job creation measure to come out of Congress." EITC is an investment in working Oregonians and communities in Oregon.

I want to close with a verse from the book of 1 John, "If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth."

Please remember that the moral measure of our economy is how well our poor and vulnerable neighbors are faring and extend the sunset for EITC and strengthen the credit. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Jessica Stewart
Director of Operations
Oregon Center for Christian Voices