

Emailed Testimony

- From: W. Blair Larsen (citymanager@cityofstanfield.com)
Subject: Testimony in Support of Property Tax Reform
Email:

Respected Committee Members,

I am very pleased to hear that you are meeting to discuss potential reform to Oregon's broken property tax system. I write to you to provide information on the difficult position of small communities like my own.

The City of Stanfield is a small, low-income community in north eastern Oregon with a population of approximately 2,125. At \$2.59 per thousand of valuation, Stanfield's tax rate is the lowest city tax rate in Umatilla County. We receive approximately \$165,000 in Property Taxes. This amount is completely inadequate to fund even the most basic of City services. Our Police Department budget alone is nearly \$500,000 a year. That amount barely covers the cost of our small, 4 officer department.

This lack of funding from property taxes forces dependence on any other source of revenue that the City can find. We are too depended on franchise fees. In 2014, we were forced to add a public safety fee to our utility bills. We also have an unhealthy reliance on traffic citations. Stanfield sits on a major ODOT freight corridor (US 395), and traffic citations are the only funding source for dealing with the negative consequences of what in effect is a major highway running through the middle of our town.

You no doubt have seen the property tax handout developed by the Oregon League of Cities. I have attached it to this email in case you have not. Every single one of the points that the league brings up in this handout is of major concern to me, and to the City of Stanfield. Correcting even a single issue would be a huge step in the right direction. I tell everyone that I can about the inequality and injustice of the Oregon property tax system. Unfortunately, most citizens are unaware of just how unfair their property taxes are. They don't know that their neighbor could be paying a much lower amount on the same house and property. They don't know that citizens in other communities have better services just because those communities chose to have a higher tax rate twenty years ago. They don't know that their decision to have lower taxes in the mid-90's was a PERMANENT decision, and would be impossible to change, even though the current circumstances are completely different.

Most citizens are ignorant of these realities because they are busy with other parts of their lives, and do not have the time to delve into Oregon's complex property tax system. You must be their representatives. You must be educated on the far-reaching consequences of the Oregon's 20-year old property tax revolt. It is up to you to make changes, because no one else can.

Thank you for your time and attention to these matters. I am happy to provide additional information to help you with the difficult decisions you will face when tackling this issue. Please don't hesitate to contact me.

Regards,

W. Blair Larsen
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541-449-3831

- From: Clifton Eldred (cowboyclif@gmail.com)
Subject: SJR - Repealing Limits on property taxes
Email:

Gentlemen:

About 18% of total rents are currently paid by an owner of residential property that is rented to the general public.

By adding State and Federal income taxes and all other State and local fees and taxes to the 18% it seems obvious that owners of real property are already overly taxed and have a heavy burden to struggle with.

What would members of the Senate Committee on Finance and Revenue think they are accomplishing by unleashing the appetite of governments for continual increases of revenues?

If this were to pass it would make all Oregonians more poor by taking more money out of the pockets of property owners and more money out of the pockets of renters since rents would continue to increase. Is a poorer citizenry of the State of Oregon what is desired.

Lower taxes is what increases business activity and jobs in a State - not higher taxes.

Why would we meet in Salem and keep increasing taxes?

PLEASE VOTE NOT ON THIS BILL.

Please vote for "We the People" and not for lobbyists.

Clif Eldred

- From: Kate Jaudes (knjaudes@yahoo.com)
Subject: SJR 201
Email:

2/2/16

Dear Senators;

The Oregon legislators are "revenue junkies." You never have enough money or get enough money to waste or burn and you constantly look for ways of stealing it from us to support your habit. You prostitute yourselves to the federal government for any illegitimate scheme that comes along to get your "monetary fix." It's time to break your habit.

Oregon collects far too much in taxes from far too few. People that don't own property, don't drive cars, don't work, and don't pay taxes get the privilege of voting to raise taxes on those of us that do. I object! Put a sales tax food and drop the State income tax. Hardly anyone works anymore but everybody eats. That would be a fair tax.

Make no changes to the property tax law.

Kate Jaudes
Salem

- From: Carla Pletka (carla@glorygal912.com)
Subject: SJR 201
Email:

To Whom It concerns:

I, with utmost urgency, request a no vote on this bill!

Oregon government legislation and regulation is running it's citizens into the ground with taxes and fees.

We cannot afford more taxes!

Increasing taxes for schools has had no positive effect in Oregon educational outcomes.

States with less taxes used for education have shown better outcomes.

Go back to the drawing board and analyze other states first before you feel a tax increase is needed here!

Most Sincerely,
Carla Pletka
Milwaukie