



SB 1513 Please reject -- property tax breaks for families of deceased public safety personnel

Testimony for House Revenue – Jody Wiser

While we sympathize with the spouses who have lost their fire service professional or police officer husband or wife in the line of duty, we are concerned that our local communities and k-12 schools already have limited resources because of our current tax structure.

There's nothing wrong with giving people money, it would be grand to give a subsidy to the spouses of people killed by police, or who weren't saved in a fire....as well. But until the state has enough resources to support basic needs, we must have strong control over additional spending. Given Oregon's dreadful graduation rates (we've gone from worst in the nation to 4th worst) and our large class sizes (3rd largest class sizes in the nation), Oregon's public education system cannot bear the incremental losses created by the seemingly endless variety of property tax breaks currently given or proposed, and local property tax breaks affect not just funding for all the local service districts, but also the state-wide school funding formula.

All property tax exemptions, current and proposed, should be evaluated in a process to reform Oregon's overall property tax structure. Yet this bill has no sunset.

Further, this exemption, at \$250,000, by far exceeds the \$19,001 to \$22,802 exemption Oregon extends to disabled vets and for their surviving spouses. How do we justify this being 10 times as high?

If we want Oregon children, including the children of the families this bill proposes to benefit, to stay in and succeed in school and graduate prepared for college or A career, Oregon needs to do everything possible to fully fund the QEM.

Instead, every year we see the legislature seem determined to explore new ways to shrink our ability to invest in creating a world class public education system that will truly give Oregon children the competitive advantage they deserve in our global economy.

With all due respect to our local fire and police personnel and their families, whose pay and benefits do address the risks of their jobs, please oppose SB 1513 or amend IT to allow no abatement of education dollars.

Thank you for your consideration.