

Chair Hass, Members of the committee

My name is Dan Torres and I am with Oregon AFSCME. We represent 26,000 members statewide including a large number of local government workers. Our members work at large local governments like the City of Portland, smaller local governments such as Harney County and everywhere in between. I am submitting testimony today in opposition to SB 202 and SB 840.

We know that the legislature is facing a very challenging budget situation that will see some very tough choices being made. We firmly believe that the answer is to raise additional revenue so that we don't see even further cuts made to crucial services that many of Oregon's most vulnerable rely on. We also recognize that a larger budget pull on the state level will leave less for local governments to use in their own budget decisions. Too often these local governments are asked to do more with less resources and in some cases are already cut down to basic services.

We see these bills as removing tools in a very important tool box of options to raise local revenue. At a time when many of the budget decisions and impacts are still being figured out, the last thing we should be doing is limiting the ability of local cities and counties to raise their own revenue. SB 202 and SB 840 represents efforts to limit or reduce the ability of these local governments to raise needed revenue. This can have a big impact on the education, public safety and health care that these localities are mandated to provide if they are not able to raise the necessary revenue.

Oregon AFSCME is opposed to SB 202 and SB 804 and urge you to not move these two bills forward as it can have a large negative impact on our members who work every day to provide top tier community services with ever dwindling resources.

Thank you for your time and consideration.