

To: Senate Committee on Rules
From: Donna Cohen
Date: Mar 24, 2017
Re: SB 888

I am writing to support a stronger SB 888. Although this is a good start, in order for it to have the most benefit for Oregonians the bill should be amended:

Section 2 (1) (b) "With the Oregon Government Ethics Commission a statement of economic interest containing the information required under ORS 244.060." should be deleted for three reasons:

1. The information contained within the tax return will be more complete than that contained in a "statement of economic interest"
2. The tax return is educational material for the public. Although many realize our tax system is very complex, seeing it in practice, for those whose incomes are well above the median, will provide important information. For example, although we know the highest tax bracket is about 35%, the recently released Presidential 2005 return shows that, due to tax expenditure exclusions from income, in spite of having income in the millions, the President paid only a 25% rate. I think most Oregonians will see the unfairness of this and have a better understanding of the effect of tax expenditures [and therefore be in a better position to weigh in on tax reform].
Also, had Mr Trump not paid the AMT [Alternative Minimum Tax] his rate would only have been 5%, which would have been an egregious expression of unfairness. Furthermore, we know that Mr Trump advocates for the removal of the AMT. I, myself, did not really comprehend the impact of the AMT until seeing its effect on the President's tax return. Now, if needed, I would be able to weigh in on a decision regarding the AMT.
3. The public has a right to see the actual tax return.

Please do move this bill ahead WITH the exclusion of the alternative "statement of economic interest".

Thank you.

Donna L Cohen, MEd, MLIS
Portland, OR 97203

Civics for Adults Workshop: To Enhance Civic Knowledge and Inspire Political Engagement
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Civics-for-Adults-1490728887922036/>