

Dear Oregon Legislature,

It's almost unbelievable I'm having to write this letter in the first place. Such is the bizarre place we find ourselves as a nation, but let's focus on patching things up at the state level right now.

I fully support Senate Bill 888's efforts to require major political party candidates for President and Vice President of United States to provide the Secretary of State with a copy of their (longform) federal income tax return for the most recent year and with written consent for public disclosure of tax return or to complete and submit statement of economic interest. This would be in effect for any candidate who wishes to appear on an Oregon primary or general election ballot and the voters' pamphlet.

These tax returns should not just be the most basic 1040, but include the full list of deductions, debts, charity offerings, etc. This point is critical, we need to know as much information as possible, and I'd encourage you to include tax professionals in this conversation so we're able to glean the clearest, most extensive financial details from these returns as possible.

It's crucial we as citizens have as much hard evidence on candidates as possible. Full transparency with tax returns is one such way to hold the candidate to his or her word.

The mockery President Trump made of this topic throughout the 2016 campaign is an insult to every American and deserves swift retribution. If not for the opaqueness he's brought to the presidency, which leaves too many questions of his character, allegiances, and financial liabilities unanswered, but because of the distraction it's created in the process.

If you're assigned to handle sensitive information, a majority of careers in this country require at least a basic background check. Since it's a position unlike any other, anyone wanting to run for president should need to go through the most stringent and exhaustive list of government-lead character investigations and financial disclosures.

If a candidate seeks control of the spending of this country's hard-earned tax dollars, American citizens have the right to know how he or she spends his or her own money. Making full tax returns available for public consumption is the simplest way to do that.

If Oregon needs to lead the way on passing such statewide legislation, I consider that to be one of the most valuable uses of taxpayer money, as it will help keep candidates honest and protect future generations from finding themselves in the unfortunate and embarrassing position in which we are in today. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Kevin Smith
Portland Indivisible
District 3