



HB 2830 Increases corporate excise tax rates

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Co-chairs Haas and Barnhart and members of the Joint Committee on Tax Reform. I am Dr. Edith Rusch, a retired professor of Educational Leadership and Policy and a volunteer with Tax Fairness Oregon.

Some of you were in attendance at a recent legislative town hall and heard the plea from a student who asked, "Am I worth investing in as a student?" As you deliberate on LC 2830 and all the options for tax reform, she and I are wondering who will have the courage to answer that question?

My testimony today was inspired by reading about Governor Brown's three legislative priorities that did not include tax reform. All I could think of was, Governor Brown, do you have an answer for Oregon's students? Day after day and year after year, they experience the underfunded Quality Education Model. They sit in overcrowded classrooms for the shortest school year in the country. They work with well-qualified teachers who struggle to accomplish more in less time and who are criticized for achievement gaps and graduation rates. When important classes aren't even the curriculum or are too full to be available, they know they will be less-well-prepared for higher education. **EVERY DAY, OREGON'S STUDENTS FEEL LIKE THEY ARE NOT WORTH THE INVESTMENT!**

Yet, as these young people move into adulthood, you want their votes, you want them to support schools, to pay taxes, to contribute their best efforts to Oregon's economy. But if this legislative session ends without credible tax reform, you will have done almost nothing to insure their civic commitment to our state!

The fact is investment in education has profound long term economic outcomes. A recent study looked at people born between 1955-1985 and followed up on their adult lives in 2011 and found that **increases in educational funding for all 12 years of students' public schooling resulted in:**

- an additional half-year of completed education
- a 6.1% reduction in annual incidence of adult poverty
- 9.6% higher earnings--Individuals had a 2.8% increase in wages at age 20; about 8% during one's thirties; and 13.4% at age 45.
- a 10% increased likelihood of previously low-income children currently being married and never previously divorced.

My assumption is that you all care deeply about Oregon's' future. I can't imagine that you wouldn't want the same economic and social outcomes for Oregon's students. **The Oregon student I heard had the courage to stand up in public and ask a very hard question. I am asking each and every one of you to find the courage to face the hard task of passing a tax reform measure that assures all Oregon's students that their worthiness is no longer in question.**

We read the bills and follow the money