

From: Sarah Westover
To: [LRO](#)
Subject: Yes on HB 2830 Public Testimony
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6/12/17

Dear members of the Joint Tax Reform Committee,

I am writing to encourage you to pass HB 2830, the Commercial Activities Tax Bill. As someone who grew up in southern Oregon and as an elected councilperson for the City of Phoenix, I am concerned by state cuts to programs that help our community thrive.

State cuts impact local services that southern Oregonians depend on. If we fail to reform Oregon's tax structure these next few remaining weeks of the legislative session, here are a few examples of what families and households would have to look forward to in Jackson County:

Severe funding cuts to mental health, senior and disability services.

Substantial funding cuts to the Oregon Preschool Promise program, which provides affordable preschool education for working families.

Substantial funding cuts to the Oregon Promise program, which provides low-income high school graduates with a community college education (a commitment made by the state of Oregon to bring families out of poverty).

Substantial funding cuts to workforce services, which provide unemployed Oregonians with employment assistance and getting back to gainful work sooner and easier.

Teacher layoffs in our community classrooms, which are already 45 percent larger than the national average with 20 percent less school spending per student.

If we don't identify a revenue solution immediately the impacts will be devastating, especially for our most vulnerable populations. I know how much these services can mean for the families I serve because I have personally benefited from many of the programs identified for deep cuts.

Growing up in a low income, single parent household, I benefitted from the TANF program that helped my mother support her four children and escape domestic abuse. TANF serves only Oregon's poorest households with dependent children, providing temporary assistance to help families avoid homelessness and get back on their feet. The proposed cuts would drive about 11,000 Oregon children deeper into poverty.

I have also been a recipient of the Oregon Health Plan at different stages of my life. As a low wage worker, without OHP I would not have been able to access the medication I need to treat my epilepsy, or see the doctor when I needed to, or access any kind of dental care. The proposed cuts to Medicaid expansions would leave 350,000 low income Oregonians without health care. Facing possible elimination of federal subsidies for medicaid expansion, state funding for health care must be a priority now more than ever.

Without addiction services under OHP my mother may not have recovered from a spiralling methamphetamine addiction that threw our family into chaos. Without treatment under OHP, I wouldn't have the happy, connected family I have today. Without treatment, my mother may not have survived. The proposed cuts would eliminate addiction services under OHP and 50 services that are now covered in prioritized list of services.

While these necessary programs are threatened with major cuts, Oregon's corporate taxes are some of the lowest in the nation. The unfair share of taxes being paid by big corporations in Oregon has steadily declined from \$1 of every \$5 to now \$1 out of every \$16. That's unacceptable. Passing a tax on the biggest businesses would go a long way toward closing the state budget gap for local services and even support badly needed improvements in class size and early childhood education.

Our communities rely on these programs, just as they rely on their elected leaders to help find ways to keep them funded. It's time for Oregon to tap into revenue streams that don't place the entire burden on the backs of working Oregonians. It's time for corporations to pay their fair share. Please pass HB 2830.

Thank you,

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Many thanks,

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