



Service Employees International Union – Oregon State Council
6401 SE Foster ▪ Portland, OR 97206

Co-Chair Nathanson & Co-Chair Hass
Joint Committee on Tax Expenditures
900 Court St., State Capitol
Salem, OR 97301

June 17, 2019

Co-Chair Nathanson and Co-Chair Hass, members of the committee:

My name is Elvyss Argueta and I'm here today representing the Service Employees International Union Oregon State Council. On behalf of the more than 80,000 public and private sector workers represented by SEIU local 49 and 503, we urge your support of House Bills 2270 and the -14 amendments.

SEIU represented workers recognize the negative impacts nicotine and tobacco have on our communities and our economy. Tobacco and nicotine use lead to heart disease, diabetes, asthma, and cancer - and smoking is the number one cause of preventable death in Oregon. These tragedies are not only avoidable they are costly. Currently, 9% of all spending on the OHP is directly related to smoking-related illness.

An increase in the cigarette tax will help reduce smoking and save lives, while also raising revenue. HB 2270 will provide funds currently budgeted for the medical coverage of low-income individuals and families on the Oregon Health Plan, help stabilize long-term health insurance costs, and bringing us closer to our union's long-held belief that all Oregon's deserve to have access to quality, affordable healthcare.

Tobacco companies have targeted communities of color, tribes, low-income, and LGBTQ communities for decades in their advertising campaigns and now youth with e-cigarette campaigns. It's time to ensure that these communities are supported well enough so that when people are ready to quit, there are resources for them to do so. SEIU supports meaningful investments in community and culturally specific programs to address the prevention and cessation of tobacco and nicotine as outlined in this legislation.

SEIU urges your support of HB 2270 and the -14 amendment, a common sense approach to curbing the use of tobacco and nicotine in our State and raising much needed revenue.

Sincerely,
Elvyss Argueta
Political & Electoral Strategist
SEIU Oregon