

Submitter: Britt Stupfel
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HB4157

Hello,

I am emailing you all again to discuss the problems with another bill that is in your committee right now. The bill in question is HB 4157, which gives a one-time payment to many Oregonians who make under a certain dollar amount annually. As I understand it, anyone who claimed the EITC on state taxes will qualify for this handout. That is going to be a great many people as the threshold for the EITC is quite high, and is not truly "low income."

I suppose my biggest issue with this bill is that it is nearly worthless to the people who lost work in 2020. What happened during the pandemic is completely the fault and responsibility of the Federal and State governments in this country. COVID did not harm enough of the workforce with sheer numbers to have really any impact on the economy, but it was less than two months before myself and hundreds of others were laid off. The Oregon State government (specifically the governor) reacted with ridiculous measures to a pandemic that turned out to be rather mild. The Oregon State government was responsible for nearly all the hardship that low income workers in Oregon have experienced in the last two years. Now we have this tiny pittance awarded to anyone with an ITIN as a sort of apology from the Legislature. Again, that is ridiculous. People who were laid off had to deal with the terrible Oregon Unemployment system and were liable for some amount of tax during that time as well. So you taxed us thousands so you could pay us back hundreds (and only a matter of YEARS later)?

An article I read on OPB mentions that the justification for this bill is partially that there is a higher cost of living. This is largely also the fault of the government because low income housing, rent caps, and the recent rent-free COVID measures have made it so that anyone who doesn't qualify for government handouts cannot afford to live in the city. That said, the rural areas that would benefit the most have some of the lowest cost of living in the state. Why would a one time \$600 payment make a difference anyway? I suggest a bill to reduce tax liability of all Oregonians by \$600 annually as an alternative. Now THAT would be a bipartisan bill that would tackle the subject of this bill, reduce unnecessary government spending, and would be rather easy to argue because even "low income" workers are responsible for paying thousands to the state government every year. A single \$600 payment is nothing in comparison.

Another concern I have for this bill is that it will give funds to people who do not possess a Social Security Number. It seems to be widening the net beyond citizens

of the US, as most citizens and some migrant workers have SSNs. I am not a tax accountant, but I think that as it is currently described, this bill would allow for certain illegal immigrants or other non resident workers in Oregon to also receive this \$600 payment. I think there will be a huge number of people who do not support that part of the "essential workers" handouts, as I don't think it likely that the Legislature will be doing any research into how many of those of questionable residency were doing "essential" jobs. Alternatively, reducing tax liability for all ITIN and SSN holders who paid tax in 2020 by \$600 would work very well as then it would still give all the same people the same payment, but it would look a lot better from both sides of the party line, since it would be the government "paying" for it rather than citizens of Oregon.

During the pandemic, Oregon created a CAT tax, fined business owners, and even recently floated the idea of a 3% sales tax. This \$600 payment is a slap in the face.

Let me be very clear: I will likely qualify for this payment, but I DO NOT want this bill to pass. \$600 is worthless. \$2,000 is worthless. We Oregonians are owed an open state Capitol, lower taxes, and a more transparent and understanding government.

With Respect,

Britt Stupfel