

Submitter: Paul Alexander
On Behalf Of: All responsible tax-paying citizens
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure: HJR201

Dear House Committee Members voting on HJR 201.

I oppose HJR 201 and here's why?

First, I was deeply saddened by the losses experienced in the Opal Creek Wilderness and Santiam Canyon fire. Sadly, it could have been prevented. How I know this is that my wife and I were going to hike into Jawbone Flats and Opal Creek a week before that disaster. We were told that there was a fire burning, and we couldn't access the area. My question: Why weren't water-carrying, tanker planes brought in to get that fire under control a week before those disastrous winds blew it out-of-control? It was a solution that should've been thought through. We as a state have enough history to know these fires need to be brought under control asap, by any means necessary, especially given our modern weather predicting ability. And now we are being confronted with a tax that would support fire-fighting. Raising taxes isn't the answer. Using the money we have in a more expedient and practical manner is what is necessary. Using the money we have is the key; not raising taxes. Following is a practical defense of why HJR 201 needs to be scrapped.

1. We can't afford it! Oregonians already pay higher taxes than most states. Many elderly people are being squeezed out of their homes due to the ever-increasing expenses of utilities, insurances, and the already high Oregon income and property taxes.

2. It removes current local control over property taxes from Counties and Cities by allowing new statewide property tax scheme without limits.

3. This would allow Portland politicians to raise property taxes on rural Oregonians for their reckless spending.

4. It removes current Constitutional limits on property tax rates (Measure 5) and assessment rates (Measure 50) with sneaky exceptions.

5. It risks throwing seniors, the disabled and other limited income Oregonians out of their homes due to rising taxes. What's the old saying, "Death by a thousand taxes"?

Lastly, HJR 201 would be a referral to voters, because that is the only way politicians can remove/tinker with current Constitutional property tax limits that protect home owners.

In conclusion, my family lives on a budget. It is important that we don't stress ourselves out and put ourselves at risk by over-spending that budget. We can't just expect others to foot the bill for our responsibilities. Similarly, our state legislatures need to figure out how to use the money they have to work with and keep within that budget. Adding new taxes isn't the answer. It's an extra burden that we should not be made to carry. I say vote no to HJR 201. Enough is enough.

Sincerely,
Paul Alexander