

RE: HJR 201

House Committee Members,

I am writing to vehemently oppose this property tax bill. Poor choices in spending affect your constituents in a cascade effect that only seems to be getting worse. This tax will not make people safer. Since 2020 Oregonians using PGE have seen a 38% increase in their bills. Nearly 18% of that arrived January 2024. We have seen huge increases in property insurance. Some of this is due to fires. Much, however, is due to inflation and rising labor costs. The part no one seems to want to discuss is that rising homelessness also causes these increased costs.

It is amazing that rampant homelessness does not diminish our property values in relation to taxes, while making many neighborhoods unsafe. My family moved in 2023, leaving the town we had lived in most of our lives, largely due to unchecked homelessness and the crime that came with it. Our McMinnville neighborhood was not safe for our children to walk in due to drug use and mental illness. The police you suggest will make us safer could only say, there is nothing we can do. Go in your house. There is no acceptable reason for tax paying citizens to be relegated to their homes in favor of gangs and those who are bent on only destruction and drug use. While there are those who are on the streets for circumstances beyond their control, the majority are those who would rather do drugs that contribute, who believe that entitlement programs are their independence and that they are owed something from those that spend their lives working to support their families.

My own family has seen its share of hardship. We struggled with housing for over twenty years, being able, through extreme hard work, to buy our first home last year. Increasing property tax on homeowners will cause a huge ripple effect throughout an already strained economy. Owning a home comes with a number of expenses for maintenance as well as local and county property taxes. Oregon already has very high income taxes. Our schools are (K-12) ranked at 42, one of the lowest in the country. Largely I expect due to the lack of willingness to actually educate children on the basics rather than social agendas. We have homeschooled since 2019, I currently pay more in property tax going to schools my children don't participate in than we have to spend on education at home. We have seen many school districts spend ridiculous amounts of money that have nothing to do with education or preparing our young people to be contributing members of society.

My overall income taxes in 2023 were significant. Enough in fact to pay for home improvements necessary to my property that I instead had to finance. We have high taxes on gas, groceries, and utilities. We do in fact; pay taxes on every product we purchase. This is pure taxation without representation, as this bill if passed will be. This is a proposal that will only help metropolitan politicians wave vague and unsubstantiated promises in front of voters while bleeding everyone in the state. A rise in property taxes will not only affect homeowners but businesses and renters as well. Causing yet more homelessness and further devastating the economy.

Myself, and several people close to me are already looking at added expenses of more than \$1200 per year, prior to this tax, if passed, going into effect. This may not seem like much to you, however for many

of us quality of food, and clothing for our children will be directly affected. This also disproportionately effects those on fixed income that are already struggling just to eat. Let alone heat their homes, many of which have fallen into disrepair as even basic maintenance is unaffordable in this current economy.

Reinstating bail would be a much more effective way of supporting Public Safety. Rather than regularly releasing people for crimes committed, so they can continue to commit those crimes, we should be instituting real consequences and programs that actually end bad behavior instead of worrying about the criminals feeling. Lack of consequence and public shame for bad behavior have fostered the environment we are currently in, both as a country and a state, where people cannot safely walk their neighborhoods and property related crimes have increased exponentially.

This bill will punish those who work to keep this economy going while rewarding the bad policies that have caused the problems we all face every day.

I urge you to consider not only your own immediate future, but that of our children and grandchildren.

Thank you for your consideration,
Shoshannah R. Smith
Amity, Oregon