

Online Submission - Written Testimony In Opposition to Oregon House Bill 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I am a fourth-generation Oregonian and a “nobody,” like millions of people in our state. Thankfully, due to our constitution, us “nobodies” still possess the right to have our voices heard. Today I am writing to express opposition to HB 2025. This recent bill is one of many since 2017 that has sought to raise taxes and fees on Oregonians. As a family of five, we and many other families are disproportionately affected by these increases. Every year we are burdened with paying an exuberant amount of taxes and fees that we get no benefit from. This needs to end. Let's look at some of the more recent fees and taxes that we have already been subjected to paying.

2017 HB 2017

Increased fees at the DMV. Increased payroll tax. Increased gas tax.

2019 HB 3447

Tax on restaurants which was passed to patrons. Increased court fees across the board. Vaping and tobacco tax. Tax rate increase to be able to use your cell phone to call 911.

2019 HB3427

Corporate Activity Tax, (CAT) which was passed on to consumers.

2019 HB2005

Paid family leave payroll tax. A tax whether you need to use the benefit or not.

2020 SB47

Waterway access permit. Fishing and hunting licenses increase.

2021 SB762

Wildfire protection plan. These costs could be recovered by utility rate increases.

2023 HB2100

DMV fee increases at all necessary services at the DMV. This bill was necessary because the money that was allotted for the DMV was instead going to the transportation department. This bill and fee increases were to fix that and fund the DMV.

2016/2023 SB1532

Tiered wage increase schedule for different regions of the state. *This created an inequitable distribution of funds outside the metro areas.* People living outside the metro still pay the same taxes and the same on goods and services. We pay the same while making less per hour simply because of where we live. We do not have transit, so we pay *more* in gas to travel to purchase these necessary items. Many people travel up to an hour one way to work. We are routinely required to travel up to three hours one way to see a specialist for medical reasons. **HB 2500 deepens this inequitable divide.**

These are the fees, taxes and disparities that have been passed on to Oregonians by the state government since 2017. Now let's look at all the *other* fee increases that Oregonians have been paying along with these egregious bills.

Gas Tax: .40 cents per gallon increase since 2023. Between January 2022 to present, gas prices at the pump have varied between a low of \$3.41 and a high of \$5.63. We have not seen gas in the two-dollar range since January 2021.

Pacific Power Residential Rate Increases: Pacific Power has raised residential rates by fifty-six percent since 2021.

Car Insurance Rate Increases: In 2023, car insurance rates increased by an average of 14%. In 2024, car insurance rates increased again by an average of 16.5%.

Health Insurance Increases: In 2023, the average cost of health insurance increased by 6.2%. In 2024, it rose another 8.3%.

Food and Toiletries: In 2022, food prices increased by 10.4%, while toiletries increased by 6.6%. In 2023, food increased by 2.7% and toiletries increased by 5.0%. In 2024, food and toiletries increased equally at 2.5%. As of July this year, food item increases vary, with one of the highest food items being beef and veal at 8.0%.

Income Tax, State and Federal: We are taxed about 33% of our gross wages. If my husband has to work mandatory overtime he is taxed at a higher rate, whether he wants to work overtime or not.

Oregon's Soft Stance On Criminal Activities and Lackluster Support Of Law

Enforcement: We, like many of our fellow Oregonians, have been forced to purchase home security cameras and pay a monthly fee to have our property monitored 24/7. We also had to purchase cameras for our vehicle due to the accident and fatality rate on Highway 97 due to

reckless and impaired driving. These are purchases and fees we wouldn't need if the State of Oregon made safety a priority for *all* of its residents.

As Oregonians, we are overburdened by the taxes and fees imposed on us by the state. We have in turn made cuts to stretch our dollar year after year. We, like many, own one vehicle to save money. We conserve electricity and water. We grow as much food as we can in our backyard. We shop at grocery sales and discount stores. We don't go on vacation. Yet again we find ourselves at the precipice of another money grab with HB 2500. If our employer was making cuts, the state wouldn't step in to save our jobs. It is the state's turn to stretch your dollar. It is the state's turn to balance your budget with the money you have already taken from us. It is the state's turn to make cuts and trim the fat. It is your turn!

Respectfully,

B. Pritchard, Madras, OR