

Dear Members of the Oregon Legislative Assembly,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB2338, which proposes the establishment of a new tax professional certification known as the Certified Tax Aide (CTA). This certification aims to create a stepping stone for individuals interested in pursuing a career in tax preparation, a field that is critical for both the state's economy and the financial well-being of its residents.

Benefits of HB2338:

1. Maintaining High Standards and Low Error Rates:

Oregon is renowned for its stringent tax practitioner licensing requirements, which have contributed to one of the lowest tax return error rates in the country. By creating the CTA certification, we can continue to uphold these high standards while also introducing a structured pathway for new entrants into the field.

2. Job Creation and Economic Impact:

The introduction of the CTA certification will directly result in the creation of higher-paying jobs within the state. Our organization, for instance, would start Certified Tax Aides at \$22 per hour, with Licensed Tax Professionals earning \$24 per hour or more. This initiative will not only provide immediate employment opportunities but will also contribute to long-term economic growth by developing a skilled workforce.

3. Accessible Training and Education:

A significant barrier to entering the tax preparation profession is the comprehensive and often overwhelming nature of existing training programs. HB2338 addresses this by proposing a more manageable 40-hour income tax course that could be offered through community colleges, making the training accessible even to those with busy schedules or other life commitments.

4. Addressing Workforce Shortages:

The tax preparation industry is experiencing a shortage of long-term employees due to the aging workforce and the seasonal nature of the job. By providing a certification that requires less initial commitment, we can attract more individuals to the profession, including those who may eventually pursue further licensing and career advancement.

5. Supporting Technological Adaptation:

Many older tax professionals face challenges with modern tax software and digital tools. The CTA certification will enable more in-person assistance for these professionals, ensuring that they can continue to provide valuable services to their clients while adapting to new technologies.

6. Encouraging Career Growth and Development:

The Certified Tax Aide certification will serve as an entry point for individuals who are interested in pursuing a long-term career in tax preparation, financial consulting, or related fields. By offering a clear, attainable goal, we can help more people begin their journey in this profession, which offers the potential for significant personal and professional growth.

In conclusion, HB2338 represents a valuable opportunity for the state of Oregon to strengthen its tax preparation industry, create new jobs, and support economic development. I urge the Oregon Legislative Assembly to pass this important legislation and help pave the way for a brighter, more prosperous future for both tax professionals and the communities they serve.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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