



Joint Committee on Ways and Means

March 22, 2025

The legislature must adopt a state budget that invests in Oregonians

Co-Chairs Lieber and Sanchez, and members of the committee,

My name is Alejandro Queral, Executive Director of the Oregon Center for Public Policy. OCPP is a nonpartisan think tank dedicated to improving the economic outcomes for all Oregonians, particularly low-income families and Oregonians of color, through research and analysis.

I respectfully submit this testimony to convey the importance of adopting a biennial budget that centers the well-being of Oregonians by continuing to make important investments in public education, health care and human services. The economic reality facing many Oregonians is challenging at best, and the increased potential for an economic downturn makes their position even more tenuous and uncertain. Today, more than two in every five Oregonians earn too little to afford a basic survival budget,¹ forcing families to make painful choices between paying their rent, keeping food on the table, or filling a life-saving prescription.

While Oregonians grapple with uncertainty, the White House and the Republican-controlled Congress have clearly articulated their desire to extend and expand tax cuts for billionaires, and have proposed paying for these cuts by eviscerating federal safety net benefits like SNAP and bedrock programs like Medicaid.

Oregonians need your leadership to protect programs and services that keep people safe, ensure quality education for all, and provide a degree of economic stability in their lives. I urge you to hold the line, be steady in your determination to invest in Oregonians, and avoid overreaction to the chaos in Washington, D.C. It is critical that you avoid pre-emptive cuts based on speculation on what might be decided in D.C. President Trump and his cadre of billionaire supporters like Elon Musk want to force the states to foot the bill in order to pay for their massive tax cuts to billionaires.

As you build the state budget, you must avoid any tax cuts for corporations and those at the very top of the income ladder. Instead, we urge you to support policies that help working families address rising costs. Expanding Oregon's Earned Income Tax Credit and pairing it with additional investments in tax assistance will put thousands of dollars in the pockets of working families. Funding workforce standards boards that will raise the wages and dignity of work for farmworkers and long-term care workers is paramount for Oregon's long-term success.

Our mission is to achieve economic justice for all Oregonians through research, analysis, and advocacy.

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Investments in housing, child care, and education are essential for working families who struggle to make ends meet to be able to see a future for themselves and their children.

¹ United for Alice, Oregon in the Crosscurrents: An Update on Financial Hardship in Oregon, United Way of Northern New Jersey, available at <https://www.unitedforalice.org/state-overview/oregon>.

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