

Submitter: Ana Araujo
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4125

Hello,

My name is Ana Araujo and I am a constituent of both Rep. Rob Nosse and Sen. Kathleen Taylor of Southeast Portland. I am a parent of two children, both of whom attend Portland Public Schools and receive education support services through Independent Education Plans (IEPs). My kicker this year is projected to be around \$1000 – that is only enough to cover six weeks of the weekly therapy that one of my children receives each week.

I am writing in support of the Revenue Forecast Modernization Act because the kicker drains the state's General Fund which is essential to funding public education. Parents, like me, whose children attend Oregon public schools are aware of what chronically underfunding our education system means for our kids' education – it means not enough support staff, classroom sizes which are too large, facilities which are poorly maintained with genuine health hazards, and more. I am a regular volunteer at my children's school in Southeast Portland and I recall arriving in my child's classroom after a ceiling tile had fallen from the ceiling due to poor maintenance. This is a common enough occurrence that kids at the school "joke" about getting hit by these tiles – but this isn't funny at all – it's dangerous. One day while helping with a cooking class, my child's teacher asked me to scrub down all the cutting boards extra well because she was concerned that mice had crawled across them while in storage. This is not healthy or sanitary at all. Children who receive special education supports often have their supports given short shrift because teachers have high caseloads and not enough support. Our schools need help – and that requires money from the state.

Which is why I stand strongly against the kicker. The Oregon Center for Public policy reports that Oregon has spent nearly \$11 billion on kicker rebates over the past 10 years, with much of that amount – 62% - going to the richest 20% of Oregonians. As I discussed in my introduction, even for a middle-class family like mine, the kicker hardly makes a dent in necessary health care costs for just *one* of my children. It is a foolish policy that does not have the interest of the broader Oregonian public at heart. We don't need cash rebates for the wealthy – we need quality schools and other public services and amenities for everyone.

Budgeting predictions should not be akin to the run of a roulette wheel – which they currently seem like if economists' predictions are "off". We can fix this by enacting the Revenue Forecast Modernization Act or HB 4125 so that money will be invested in the well-being of all Oregonians.

For this reason, I am asking you – our elected representatives -- to speak out loudly and firmly in favor of this bill and pass it into law. The current federal administration, led by the wealthiest Americans, will soon have its legislative priorities put into effect and this will mean that Oregon's General Fund will need even more cash support. The kicker only serves to drain the potential reserves we can use to invest in our state's citizens. We need a revenue predication system that cares for children, families, the elderly, and everyone who lives in Oregon. Let's enact the Revenue Forecast Modernization Act now.

Sincerely,

Ana M. Araujo