

Submitter:

Alyssa Koomas

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Revenue

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

HB4125

Dear House Committee on Revenue,

I am a resident of Southeast Portland and a parent of two PPS elementary school children. Every year that I get a kicker check it reinforces how broken our budgeting system is in the state of Oregon. I think about how our pleas for sufficient funding for public education are met with "we don't have the funds" and yet...I'm being refunded? Perhaps my kicker check last year wouldn't do much more than re-glue the ceiling tiles that threaten to fall on my child's head during school assemblies, but I know that's not true for the wealthiest Oregonians. The kicker is regressive, putting the most money back in the wealthiest pockets, and it is high time to make it right.

The way the Kicker is structured destabilizes the General Fund. This instability leads to vital institutions like public education being underfunded year after year. At our neighborhood school, we have to fundraise to buy bandaids for the part-time school nurse to administer. The 100+ year old building is crumbling before our eyes and my children have stories of the rats that scurry across classrooms. This isn't even to touch on the burden we have placed on teachers with growing classroom sizes, fewer and fewer support staff to help children with learning and behavioral challenges, and the plummeting academic outcomes we continue to see. There's not doubt in my mind that Oregon's fiscal health is tied to our ability to fund public education, and right now we are failing.

The Revenue Forecast Modernization Act HB 4125 makes budget predictions less high stakes for our children and communities. If economists are "off" on their predictions, this won't necessarily trigger a massive cash payback to the wealthiest among us who need the money least. It would mean Oregon can invest in all Oregonians.

I'm asking our elected lawmakers to champion this bill and to pass it into law. As the federal "Big Beautiful Bill" legislation starts to take effect, Oregon's General Fund will require a solid foundation, and the current Kicker is a perpetual crack in that foundation. Let's have a revenue prediction system that ensures investment in all our children and our state.

Thank you