

Submitter: Keith LaHaie  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: House Committee On Revenue  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4125  
House Committee on Revenue:

I strongly oppose HB 4145, which is clearly nothing more than a set of budget gimmicks and technical rejiggering intended to reduce or even eliminate our constitutionally protected “Kicker” tax refund. Is this about a PERS “bailout?”

HB 4125 is being presented as a “modernization” of the Kicker. Given that the Legislature has wanted to eliminate the Kicker for years, do you really expect us to believe that?

With this Legislature, it’s always about “more money” and rarely about “more accountability.” We make national headlines for our failing schools and transportation system. Given the state’s poor track record on so many issues, why should we trust you on this?

Oregon is already in the top-10 for highest income tax rates in the country. The “Kicker” refund is one of the few bright spots for those of us “paying the bills.” Oregon is awash in money – it’s near the top per-capita spending, with billions spent on unnecessary and failed projects and initiatives. Our Education and transportation systems are among the worst in the country. It’s not about the money – it’s about mismanagement.

Mismanagement and failure shouldn’t be rewarded with even more taxpayer largesse. The Legislature needs to figure out a way to prioritize needs and manage them within the current budget framework. Eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse – and especially - ideologically-based programs. You need to do that before you try to squeeze even more hard earned cash out of struggling taxpayers. I thought we were all about “affordability” now, right?

Supporters of this measure (many of whom are apparently disseminating a form letter provided by an education organization) cry about “more money for schools,” blaming their failure on a lack of funding. They also falsely claim that Kicker refunds go to the “wealthiest Oregonians” who “don’t really need it,” when that’s clearly not the case. Oregon’s regressive tax bracket scheme begins at \$50,000 of income – hardly “wealthy.” And besides, who are these people to say that taxpayers don’t “need” the money?

To put it clearly – “HANDS OFF OF OUR KICKER.”

Thanks.  
Keith LaHaie  
Central Point