

Submitter: Melanie Landon-Hays
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Revenue
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1507

Co-Chairs and members of the committee,

As our voice in Salem, we are counting on you to reject some of the most egregious and costly tax breaks for corporations and the wealthy and prevent cuts to public safety, schools, childcare, and other critical services. That begins with voting yes on SB 1507.

SB 1507 helps recoup \$311.6 million in funding for programs Oregonians care about by “disconnecting” Oregon from automatically mirroring some of the most costly tax loopholes in H.R. 1, the disastrous budget bill signed by President Trump.

To be clear, there is more work to do beyond SB 1507. There is still a larger budget gap to close, and balancing the budget by slashing programs Oregonians rely on is the wrong approach. But one thing is certain: passing SB 1507 is a critical first step in addressing the budget crisis created by H.R. 1.

As an employee of Western Oregon University, I know that this lost revenue will directly affect my institution. Please make this revenue available so that higher education institutions like mine are not forced to make drastic cuts.

As a regional comprehensive university, WOU serves the rural, the transfer, and the first-generation students who are the future of Oregon’s workforce.

As the Director of General Education, I see firsthand that 'Gen Ed' is not just a checklist. It is where students learn the critical thinking and adaptability required to navigate a changing economy. From where I sit, I see the critical intersection between faculty mentorship and student success. For our first-generation students, faculty are not just delivering content; we are the stability, the advising, and the support network that ensures they make it to graduation.

However, we are at a breaking point. When university budgets are slashed, we struggle to retain the high-quality faculty needed to do this work. We must remember that faculty are also local homeowners, taxpayers, and consumers. Stabilizing university funding is a direct way to stabilize the local economies of Monmouth, Independence, and Polk County.

Furthermore, WOU is an economic engine of the regional workforce. We are unique in that our graduates overwhelmingly stay in Oregon. The students we educate today

become the teachers in local school districts, the behavioral health specialists in rural counties, and the civic leaders in the Willamette Valley. When they graduate, they don't leave; they return to their home communities to work, pay taxes, and raise families. There is a direct, unbreakable tie between the health of WOU and the health of Oregon's regional economy.

However, we cannot sustain this work on a shrinking budget. Oregon already ranks 46th nationally in per-student funding at public universities; a cut to the PUSF translates directly to fewer course offerings, larger class sizes, and delayed graduation timelines. It reduces the advising and mentorship capacity that is absolutely critical for keeping first-generation students enrolled. If we allow funding to erode, forcing tuition hikes and program reductions, we push these students toward out-of-state institutions. The data shows that when students leave Oregon for college, they rarely come back. We cannot afford to export our future workforce. WOU is not a discretionary expense; it is an investment in Oregon's resilience. Please help us keep the doors of opportunity open.

The decision before you and your colleagues this session should be clear: Prioritize protecting Oregon families, not further enriching the ultra-wealthy.

Please vote YES on SB 1507.

Thank you.