

HB 4035 C Corporations Corporate Excise Tax Reporting

Testimony for House Revenue Committee -



Chair Barnhart, members of the House Revenue Committee,

Tax Fairness Oregon supports HB 4035 for fostering government accountability.

We wish to comment on the Oregon Associated Industries comments submitted to this committee that opposes HB 4035.

-OAI states "From an empirical perspective, having legislators or the public examine public lists of taxpayers is not useful in formulating tax policy" due to "the lack of public understanding of the complexities of corporate income taxes, especially as they apply to multi-state business entities." Although this claim is based on "an empirical perspective," no evidence is offered to back it up. Another way to state this would be "the facts indicate that we need to protect corporations from the public's ignorance by keeping them ignorant (however, we provide no facts to support this.)"

Legislators and citizens should have access to information that casts the brightest light on how our tax policy is being applied. Oregon citizens who are forgoing tax revenue as a result tax breaks have a right to know how these tax breaks are applied and specifically who is benefitting.

Billions of dollars of tax credits, subsidies, grants, tax abatements, etc. are granted on an individual, not an aggregate basis. When tax breaks are sought and granted, they are justified on the basis of beneficial economic impact. Arguing that the individual results of these breaks need to be obscured by aggregation is self-serving and disingenuous. If corporations fear that exposing the minimal information required by HB 4035 would provide insufficient context for Oregon legislators and citizens to fully appreciate how Oregon benefits from these tax breaks, the corporations would be well served to provide additional information and context to increase the understanding of our legislators and citizens. Included in this additional information could be details of the other, hidden "substantial taxes" they are paying.

Providing the non-aggregated data prescribed by HB 4035 will increase the visibility and accountability of our tax policy and implementation.

We read the bills and follow the money