



SB 694 and SB 562 New Spending Programs when We Have No New Money to Spend

Testimony for Senate Veterans and Emergency Preparedness – 2.28.2017

County and city budgets are strained, and 40% of each property tax break takes money from k-12 funding. These bills offer property tax breaks we simply don't have the money for. If you want to pass them, at least amend them. Allow local communities to give up their tax base, but not the State's k-12 dollars. These bills are additional examples of good ideas in need of revenues that simply do not exist, nor are they likely to exist in the near future.

We urge you to let these bills stay in committee in order to make judgements about all of the bills before you. That's the role of policy committees. Help Ways and Means by deciding which ideas to move forward and which ones should not move out of your committee.

Keep the following facts and figures in mind when you make your decision about on these bills:

- Every \$85,000 you invest in another program would buy a teacher for an overcrowded classroom in your district.
- Every dollar that goes to the new program reduces the number of dollars available for Oregon Opportunity Grants, even those for vets.
- Every million dollars you spend on a new idea means 350 families won't get rent assistance so they can stay in their homes (via the Emergency Housing Account), or
- Every million dollars you spend means there will be no funds for 100 eligible children to attend high quality preschool, benefiting them and their families their entire lives. There are more than 20,000 eligible children (below 200% of poverty level) that we don't reach now.

Tax Fairness Oregon strongly believes that until Oregon has a fundamentally fair and adequate revenue stream that can support the basic needs of its citizens, the legislature should not be considering new ways to spend money – via new programs, grants, tax incentives, or property tax breaks.

We read the bills and follow the money