

2019

# Oregon Revenue Coalition

*Working Together for Oregon's Future*

## Revenue Policy Values

All tax and revenue policies have strengths and weaknesses – none are perfect. Individual and organizational values, as well as existing social and economic realities, inform which tax policies are preferable and which are not.

Oregon's current tax system is inadequate to meet the expectations of our people. It fails to raise enough revenue to fund the services Oregonians depend on. Furthermore, Oregon's poorest taxpayers are asked to pay a larger share of their income in taxes than the richest 1 percent. The legacy of discriminatory tax policies has erected barriers for communities of color in Oregon.

The Oregon Revenue Coalition supports revenue reform that will yield additional revenues to support critical services for Oregon's people. We have listed below those values we deem essential and those that are secondary, to guide tax policy decision making.

The values through which we evaluate proposals for support include these features:

- **Adequacy:** Oregonians support a fully funded education system, access to pre-school and higher education, affordable housing, safety-net supports for the vulnerable, public safety, and the ability to access health care. Our state has not been able to fully meet these needs in the past, but with a revenue system that delivers sufficient revenues, this could change. Tax and revenue policies must raise enough revenue to fund the public structures that create opportunity for all.
- **Equity:** Tax policies with impacts that are inequitable (based on race, ethnicity, and gender) are problematic. We urge the legislature to consider equity in any new tax policy, to remove these barriers and inequities.
- **Progressivity:** The policy should ensure that those with greater income and wealth contribute a larger share to support the common good than those with less.
- **Viability:** Proposals moved forward ought to be able to pass both chambers and sustain a referendum challenge at the ballot.

We acknowledge that the system must be viewed in its entirety, and not just in terms of a single revenue source. We also understand that it is difficult to create a proposal that will meet all four values in equal measure. Nevertheless, we believe that our state will be best served by careful attention to these principles. We also embrace these secondary principles:

- **Stability:** All tax proposals should be able to sustain vital programs and services over time. Ideally, the revenue from a tax should grow with the economy and experience minimal volatility. This may be accomplished by reserving funds as well as by inclusion of stable sources of revenue.
  - **Simplicity:** Tax policies should be straight-forward, easy to understand, comply with, and administer, and difficult to manipulate.
  - **Horizontal fairness:** Similarly situated taxpayers should be treated the same.
  - **Neutrality:** Economic decisions should be made on their own merits, not to take advantage of tax subsidies. Revenue policy should not reward an entity for acting in a way that it would without tax incentives.
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**oregon revenue coalition: An ad hoc group of organizations representing public education, long-term care, human services, organized labor, civil rights, the faith community, and other areas. Members include:**

AAUP-Oregon, Advocacy Coalition of Seniors and People with Disabilities, AFT-Oregon, Alzheimers Association, American Association of University Women of Oregon, Alcohol & Drug Program Association of Oregon, Asian Pacific American Network of OR (APANO), Association of Oregon Faculty, Brain Injury Association of Oregon, Cascadia Behavioral Health Care, Inc., Children First for Oregon, Columbia River Pensioners (ILWU), Common Cause Oregon, Community Action Directors of Oregon, Community Providers Association of Oregon, Confederation of Oregon School Administrators (COSA), Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, Gray Panthers of Oregon/Greater Idaho, Human Services Coalition of Oregon (HSCO), ILWU, Jewish Federation of Portland, League of Women Voters of Oregon, League of Oregon Cities, National Association of Social Workers – Oregon Chapter, Neighborhood Partnerships, Oregon Advocacy Center, Oregon AFL-CIO, Oregon AFSCME, Oregon Alliance for Retired Americans, Oregon Alliance of Seniors and Health Services, Oregon Association of Area Agencies on Aging & Disabilities (O4AD), Oregon Center for Public Policy, Oregon Education Association, Oregon Environmental Council, Oregon Health Care Association, Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force, Oregon School Boards Association (OSBA), Oregon School Employees Association, Oregon State Firefighters Council, Oregon Student Association, Pacific Northwest Council of Carpenters, PCUN, Rural Organizing Project, SEIU-OPEU, Social Justice Alliance of Josephine County, Support Oregon Services Alliance (SOSA), Survivors Advocating for an Effective System (SAFES), Tax Fairness Oregon, United Cerebral Palsy of Oregon & SW Wash., United Seniors of Oregon, Urban League of Portland, Women’s Rights Coalition.