



## OREGON HOUSE REPUBLICAN OFFICE

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### **HOUSE DEMOCRATS VOTE AGAINST BILLS TO BOLSTER MIDDLE CLASS FAMILIES**

*A package of five bills designed to support working families, seniors, and college students were rejected by House Democratic majority*

**SALEM, Oregon** – Today, House Democratic lawmakers outright rejected five bills designed to help working families, seniors, and college students keep their heads above water. The five bills are part of a package entitled *Keeping Oregon Affordable for Middle Class Families*, which would allow Oregonians to keep more of their earned income at a time when the Legislature is passing new back-door sales taxes like the corporate sales tax and the Cap and Trade tax.

“Oregon was recently rated the worst state in the nation for how much money a worker gets to keep after paying state and federal taxes. When we talk about affordability, too often the legislature’s response is to look at ways it can create new and costly government programs to address issues around poverty or helping people living on the margins. However, a simpler solution is letting Oregonians keep more of what they earn,” stated Representative Cedric Hayden (R-Fall Creek).

Hayden sponsored two bills in the package, HJR 25, a constitutional ballot measure to freeze property taxes for aging seniors, and HB 3442, a measure to create a flat 4% income tax for working families whose adjusted gross income is below \$50,000 for a single filer, or \$100,000 for a joint filer. “When we talk about people living at lower or fixed incomes, the fastest and most direct way we can help them afford to live is to stop taxing them more than they can afford.”

House Bill 3410 would have created a \$1,000 child tax credit for parents of children 18 and under. Representative Shelly Boshart Davis (R-Albany) chief sponsored the bill because as a mom with three kids, she understands how strapped many families are to meet basic needs like daycare, school costs, and planning for college. “The state has programs like the Oregon 529 account for college, but to save money, you have to actually have the money to invest. A \$1,000 child tax credit would have gone a long way towards helping families use their own money to meet their children’s basic needs. When you layer all the new taxes that will be passed to families this year on top of all the other expenses parents have, \$1,000 per child would have gone a long way towards helping a family keep their heads above water,” Representative Boshart Davis said.

As state universities once again seek higher tuition increases, Representative E. Werner Reschke (R - Klamath Falls) proposed House Bill 3400 to allow students to deduct some of their student loan interest from their state tax return. “It’s disappointing that every Democrat in the House of Representatives

voted to deny college students the ability to deduct interest on their student loans from their state taxes,” stated Representative Reschke. “Legislators often talk about the soaring costs of higher education but offer minimal help. A student loan is likely to be the second largest debt a person will take out in their lifetime (home mortgage being the largest). And yet this meaningful idea that would make a positive impact was denied a committee hearing or a debate on the House floor by the super majority party. I continue to wonder who is being represented by this type of inaction.”

In the final days as the legislature looks to use more government dollars for low-income housing, Representative David Brock Smith (R-Port Orford) says that his House Bill 3402 could provide a way for many Oregonians who are rent-burdened to have the cash they need to afford rent.

“When you see more middle-class families struggling to pay rent, the fastest way we can help them isn’t by expanding programs which were designed specifically to help our most vulnerable citizens,” Representative Brock Smith said. “For working families paying rent, a direct deduction of rent costs will give them the money they need when the rent is due. This legislative concept is something being discussed on presidential candidate debate stages, but we don’t have to wait until after a 2020 election to help our neighbors. We can do this right now, in Oregon, to help working families.”

Chief sponsors of the five bills said their legislative concept never received any consideration from legislative committee chairs whose committees had been assigned the bills.

“Politicians talk a good game about wanting to help families, seniors, college students, veterans, and small businesses when it’s campaign season. But then we get here during session and we see bill pass that will do more harm than good when it comes to supporting Oregonians, while the bills that could make a direct, positive impact never see the light of day,” noted Rep. Hayden. He explained that recent voter polling during showed widespread support for the package.

After today’s votes to kill the package, Rep. Hayden said the group is considering taking the bills directly to voters. “When 79% of Oregonians think seniors shouldn’t have to have their property taxes climb faster than their incomes are rising, and the legislature ignores that, we’re not doing our jobs here by ignoring the concerns of voters. What taxpayers need is to keep more of their own money, not have it swept away by a bunch of new laws that will cost them more at the pump, at the grocery store, and everywhere they shop or recreate. We really need to do more to keep Oregon affordable.”

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