



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 97-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

February 22, 2017

To: Senate Committee on Education
Senator Arnie Roblan, Chair

Re: [SB 439](#), [SB 565](#) and [SB 595](#), **Comment**

The League of Women Voters believes that responsible government should maintain an equitable and flexible system of taxation.

These three bills are intended to “create a credit against income taxes for amounts paid as interest on qualified education loans.” While perhaps a feasible idea to consider in better financial times, we urge rejecting these tax credit bills this session, unless significant additional revenue is provided for this biennium and into the future.

Currently, the state “gives away” billions of dollars each biennium in so called “tax expenditures” which include deferrals, deductions, exemptions and credits. Once established, these tax expenditures take money from available General Fund monies far into the future. Introducing new tax credits despite the need to better fund schools and human services does not seem prudent during this biennium.

The ability of the state to fund its education, public safety and social services has produced a stark co-chairs framework. We must face fiscal reality. We are confronted with serious funding shortages. Gut wrenching cuts will be made this year and every sector of public services will be affected. We urge special consideration toward safety net programs for vulnerable populations and public schools. We urge minimizing these tax credits and others.

The LWVOR Legislative Action Committee recognizes that while we might support some programs in other sessions, this is not the year. We have prioritized STABLE REVENUE and more EQUITABLE TAX REFORM balancing individual and business investments in Oregon’s future. Given the \$1.8 Billion deficit for the upcoming biennium and an even greater deficit projected in future years, LWVOR **strongly urges adopting stable and fair revenue policies and tax reforms to adequately fund services and functions critical to the well-being of Oregonians--education, social services, public safety, health care, natural resources and other vital services.**

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss these measures. While well intended, Oregon cannot afford the reduction in revenues at this time.

Handwritten signature of Norman Turrill in black ink.

Norman Turrill
LWVOR President

Handwritten signature of Christine M. Vogel in black ink.

Chris Vogel
LWVOR Education Policy Coordinator