

# OPINION

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## 'Time Out' on Kicker Deserves Support

### Oregon's revenue system is broken

Gov. Kulongoski's proposal for a 6-year "time out" on kicker refunds addresses directly the most important domestic issues facing Oregonians today: the quality and affordability of our education systems, access to basic health care for all, budget stability in state and local governments and more.

This is an opportunity to take a good look at the gambling-dependent revenue structure we have created and ask ourselves these questions: "Aren't we better than this? Aren't we smarter? Isn't it short-sighted, even shameful, that we adults have not created a more honorable system of funding our

schools and other critical services? Isn't the kicker just another form of gambling? How can we possibly take any pride in loading this system on the backs of our own children and grandchildren?"

Our current revenue system requires every state and local government entity to look to the Oregon Department of Revenue and the Legislature to place our bets for us. If the Department of Revenue can predict Oregonian's future within 2 percent, two years in the future (when no one in the world can predict the cost of fuel tomorrow morning), then—I suppose—the "house" wins, and no kicker checks will be forthcoming.

If, however, the Department of Revenue underestimates future revenues by more than 2 percent, we Oregonians "win"—an average of a couple of hundred dollars each, but for the vast majority of Orego-

nians, the "win" is an amount equal to a couple of tanks of gas.

The concept is ludicrous, particularly in light of the facts that we now participate in an increasingly competitive global marketplace, that our competitors actually value

This "system" has not been an answer to the needs of Oregonians. We can all see that. We have created a system that shifts the responsibilities of citizenship to a subgroup of Oregonians who fulfill their roles of funding public ser-

gratification.

The kicker money currently on the horizon is largely the result of the doubling of capital gains income from 2003 to 2005. The vast majority of Oregonians did not likely see any appreciable growth in personal income in this same period, not with the increasing cost of fuel alone factored in.

More than one third of the doubling of capital gains income was enjoyed by just 1,700 of Oregon's most wealthy households. The decisions of this small group of people regarding when to take or defer their profits on capital gains drives the volatility of Oregon's entire revenue system. These decisions are not taken in public, and there is no public accountability for their actions, but all of us—and our descendants—are impacted in both our public and our household budgets.

*Isn't it shortsighted, even shameful, that we adults have not created a more honorable system of funding our schools and other critical services?*

and employ strategic thinking, and that they are not hamstrung by the partisan politics and rigid ideologies that we have allowed to dominate Oregon political discourse throughout the last decade.

VICES ONLY as a byproduct of gambling. No one walks into a lottery facility and opens their pocketbooks with an intention of supporting our schools or for anything else beyond an immediate rush of self-



BY SEN. AVEL GORDLY

Oregon needs tax reform and restructuring, and we need to keep that discussion on the table where the Governor put it until we Oregonians do something substantive and sensible to resolve the perpetual funding crisis we have locked ourselves into.

I applaud Gov. Kulongoski's move to place this issue on the front burner, where it needs to be. Let us all—all Oregonians—now focus on the fundamentals of solving our problems with stability as a fundamental principle.

Sen. Avel Gordly represents southeast and northeast Portland in the Oregon Legislature.

### Letter to the Editor

BY HAROLD PHILLIPS

When I was pulled over at about 2350 hours on April 13, the Portland police officer approached my truck and requested to see my drivers license, proof of insurance and to keep my hands in clear view or on the steering wheel.

I told her that my driver's license was in my jacket pocket and my insurance card was in the glove compartment. The officer asked me for my license and insurance again. I could feel that tensions were rising. I reminded her of the order she had previously given me to keep my hands in her clear view and repeated that my license was in my jacket pocket. Then she told me in a stern voice, 'I want to see your license and proof of insurance now.'

I told her that I was going to

reach in my jacket pocket. So I moved slowly, retrieved the item she requested and handed it to her. She demanded to see my proof of insurance. I was nervous about this request because of her obvious anger toward me, so I stated that blacks have been shot around here because they think someone is reaching for a gun and I'm not trying to get shot! She was angered by this comment and told me I was rude and disrespectful. From the officer's stand point this was probably true, but from where I was sitting, this was reality.

I slowly retrieved by insurance card and gave it to her. When she had my information in her hand she began telling me the reason she stopped me. She stated, "You went around the block a second time,

plus you unlawfully changed lanes and you did not signal." (Very untrue statement.)

She told me that I was in a high vice area and sarcastically asked

*I could not believe that an officer would say such a thing or be so presumptuous.*

what was I doing in the area? She did not allow me to answer. She continued by saying that, 'the only reason you could possibly be in this area is to solicit a prostitute or you're buying crack cocaine.'

I could not believe that an officer

would say such a thing or be so presumptuous, so I asked her to repeat what she had just said. She stated again, 'the only reason you could be in this area is to solicit a

prostitute or you're buying crack cocaine.'

I was shocked and I was angry. But I politely replied that occasionally I have problems sleeping and sometimes during that time I just drive around town, nowhere in par-

ticular. She asked me again what I was doing in the area, if I was soliciting prostitution or trying to buy crack? I realized that the officer was not listening to a word I was trying to say. At this point I did not try to hide my anger. We both began speaking at the same time and in voices louder than speaking voice. She said, 'You think that just because I'm a female you can talk over me?' She then stated, 'I could write you up for soliciting a prostitute or buying crack.' No one had approached my truck nor had I approached anyone. I could have understood being stopped had I spoke to someone on the street, but I hadn't. She did not answer me.

She wrote me a ticket with three ORS codes on it, but did not state what the codes stood for. I as-

sumed that the ticket was for what she had told me, 'soliciting a prostitute' and I assumed that the others were traffic infractions. A few days later, when I consulted my attorney, he told me that all the citations were traffic related.

Allowing me to believe that I was being accused of soliciting a prostitute was very cruel and inhumane. I spent days thinking about the possibility of losing my career over something that was totally untrue and being so embarrassed that maybe even a few of my peers might think this accusation was true.

For several days I didn't tell any of my friends or family, I didn't sleep, I didn't eat and thoughts about the incident consumed most

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## My Experience Driving While Black

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