



A GOP plan to reform the federal tax code could cost Oregonians the deduction of state and local taxes, which totaled \$5.9 billion in 2015.

## Federal tax reform plan could cost Oregonians

By Claire Withycombe  
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Oregonians could see their federal tax bills increase if a key deduction is overturned by Congress, as a tax reform plan unveiled this week suggests.

The tax break, called SALT by tax wonks, allows taxpayers who itemize their deductions to subtract the amount they pay in state and local taxes from their taxable income.

In 2015, Oregonians deducted nearly \$5.9 billion in state and local taxes from their federal income taxes. About half of the money deducted came from filers who earned between \$100,000 and \$500,000 that year.

Paul Warner, the head of Oregon's nonpartisan Legislative Revenue Office, said in a Sept. 20 presentation to the Oregon Senate Finance and Revenue Committee that the repeal of the deduction could "disproportionately affect taxpayers" in Oregon.

The policy affects states differently because state taxes differ.

Oregon, for example, has a relatively high income tax, but no statewide sales tax.

About 29 percent of Oregon taxpayers could see federal tax increases as a result of a repeal of the deduction, according to figures Warner cited that were compiled by State Tax Notes, a specialty publication. State Tax Notes calculated an average increase of \$573.

The change wouldn't likely take place in isolation, though, as the tax plan made public this week also calls for other changes, such as reducing federal personal and corporate income tax rates.

Oregon would likely see dramatic effects if any substantial changes are made to federal tax policy, legislative economists said earlier this year.

"While the ultimate form of federal tax reform is highly uncertain, Oregon is uniquely positioned to experience significant revenue effects, both positive and negative," they noted in a March report.

Not only does Oregon automatically connect itself to any change in federal tax bases, but economists also cited

the state's "heavy" reliance on the personal income tax and its "one-of-a-kind" kicker policy that refunds income tax revenues when they exceed projections.

Key Oregon lawmakers on both sides of the aisle have criticized the state's reliance on the income tax for some time now.

But the Legislature is unlikely to make big changes to state taxes until 2019, due both to the issue's complexity and political sensitivity.

Warner made his presentation last week on the heels of a legislative session where lawmakers, the business lobby and union groups were still smarting from a tough union-backed ballot measure campaign to create a tax on corporate sales.

Uncertainty about federal reforms was another reason for legislative "foot-dragging" when it came to big changes to the state's system in the 2017 session, said state Sen. Mark Hass, D-Beaverton. Hass is a leading advocate for restructuring state taxes.

Could the repeal of the state and local deduction by a Trump White House and a Republican-led Congress actually provide fuel for largely Democratic Oregon to tinker with its tax structure?

Potentially, Hass said.

But he's not holding his breath to see what Congress does on taxes. He pointed to congressional efforts to overturn the Affordable Care Act, which have thus far fizzled, and, he said, could have had a bigger impact on Oregon's budget.

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## "A Mammogram Really Can Save Your Life"

by **Cyndy Fox, M.S., R.N.**

My beloved piano teacher died of breast cancer. My aunt and mother-in-law were also diagnosed with breast cancer, but they are still with us and healthy more than 10 years later.

What accounts for the differences in these outcomes? **Mammograms.**

My piano teacher did not participate in the recommended breast cancer screening mammograms. In fact, she had never had a mammogram. When she felt a breast lump in her late fifties, unfortunately the cancer was no longer localized in her breast, but had metastasized, or spread to other parts of her body. Even chemotherapy couldn't tackle her cancer.

Like millions of other women, my aunt and mother-in-law had their cancers first detected by a routine screening mammogram. Because the cancers were so small and found very early, both women were able to have them surgically removed. And then they went on living their lives.

As the saying goes, "A Mammogram Can Save Your Life." Statistics have proven that screening mammograms can decrease mortality, or deaths from breast cancer. According to the Surveillance, Epidemiology and End Results (SEER) program of the National Cancer Institute, if a breast cancer is found early when it is localized (confined to the primary site and not spread), there is a 98.9% five-year survival rate.

**So, if early detection is the best prevention, when should I start getting mammograms?**

The 2017 recommendations from the American Cancer Society for women with average breast cancer risk are as follows:

- **Women ages 40 to 44** with average risk should have the choice to start annual breast cancer screening with mammograms (x-rays of the breast) if they wish to do so.
- **Women age 45 to 54** should get mammograms every year.
- **Women 55 and older** may switch to mammograms every 2 years, or can continue yearly screening.
- Screening should continue as long as a woman is in good health and is expected to live 10 more years or longer.

\*\*These guidelines are for women at average risk for breast cancer. Women at high risk – because of family history, a breast condition, or another reason – need to begin screening earlier and/or more often.

Dr. Keith Thomas, board-certified general surgeon at Blue Mountain Hospital is a fellow of the American College of Surgeons (ACS) as well as President of the ACS Oregon Chapter, and thereby follows the ACS guidelines. The ACS supports the recommendations of the American Cancer Society, the American College of Radiology and the Society for Breast Imaging, who concur that women of average risk should be able to begin having mammograms at age forty.

In addition to these professional organizations, there are many other medical groups and organizations giving their advice on when to start getting a mammogram.

Some of these breast cancer screening guidelines have been modified throughout the past several years and there are also variances among the groups. This has created challenges for both patients and providers in choosing or recommending the most appropriate approach.

But, there does seem to be a consensus or common thread throughout:

- When deciding at what age to start screening mammograms, you should consider any personal risk factors for breast cancer.
- Weigh the benefits and costs to you.
- Then talk with your medical provider. A patient-provider discussion will help you to make an informed, individualized decision that is right for you.

*Remember... A Mammogram Really Can Save Your Life.*

\*\*Mammograms are available at Blue Mountain Hospital (541) 575-1311. To schedule an appointment with a primary care provider, call Strawberry Wilderness Community Clinic @ (541) 575-0404.



**BLUE MOUNTAIN CARE CENTER Resident of the Month**

**JACK COGGINS**

Jack was born on June 21, 1926 in Denver, Colorado. Jack and his sister Corleen were raised in Denver. Jack married Carol Jean Avery on October 12th. They had two children, a daughter, Shawn, and a son, John. They raised their children in Eugene, Oregon. During his younger days, Jack drove a gas tanker and was a manager at Montgomery Ward. After he retired, he became a shuttle driver for Hilyers Ford in Woodburn, Oregon.

Jack and his wife loved to go to the beach every chance they got. They also liked to travel to visit family. Jack and his wife also loved raising boxer dogs and always had a couple of them around.

Jack came to the Blue Mountain Care Center on May 19, 2017.



**Presents...**

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