

ARTS EDUCATION AND ACCESS

IF YOU WISH TO SPEAK TO CITY COUNCIL, PRINT YOUR NAME, ADDRESS, AND EMAIL.

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Subject: Testimony to the Portland City Council on the proposed arts head tax, June 27, 2012

When I received my education attending Portland Public Schools in the 1950s and 60s, the average boomer class size was in the range of 35 students – 32 on the low end and up to 40 on the high end. Fifth grade through eighth grade was at the iconic Rose City Park School. With the exception of the classroom lighting and the newer gymnasiums that were added before my time there, the inside of this classic, well built now century old structure was still for the most part, the same as originally constructed. Art instruction was taught by the same classroom teachers who taught the basic three R's; reading writing and arithmetic, along with anything else that was part of the regular curriculum. The same was true in the primary grades. Only when I entered high school, was art taught by a separate teacher, and that was an elective class.

With the expanse of the internet at their fingertips, and smaller to mini class sizes, the current generation of students have a much easier road to navigate for an overall high quality and meaningful education. As I stand here today, the economy is stumbling, in part due to government intervention and social engineering. Incomes are not keeping up with both inflation, and the continual proliferation of tax and fee increases - including those assessed by the City of Portland.

Now is not the time to increase taxes even more when the specific purpose is for a luxury that is excessive to the basic needs of our schools. Furthermore, there two principal tribulations with the proposed head tax:

First, a head tax is regressive. A person with a fixed or modest income pays the same amount as a person with a high income. Likewise, it doesn't take into consideration what other financial conditions, obligations, responsibilities or dependants a person may have. Moreover, there are privacy issues with how the city will determine who will pay and who will be exempt. So much for all the rhetoric about an equity commission because this tax proposal lacks equity in any form.

Second, having the city collect a portion of a tax specifically designed to be distributed to a very select number of non-profit organizations is beyond the reach and scope of city government. It is an attempt to legislate what should be a choice by individuals - if or what organizations they freely choose to financially support. Where is the equity to all the other educational 501C3 organizations in Portland? Using the schools as a front to implement a tax to fund specific non-profits is an attempt by this administration – using other people's money – to pick winners and losers. That smacks of socialism

Finally, it is up to the individual school boards to place a school funding tax measure ballot, not the responsibility of this council. Likewise, it is not the responsibility of this council to place a tax measure before the voters to specifically fund their personal picks of non-profit organizations. Therefore Mr. Mayor, this tax proposal is out of order!

Respectfully,

Terry Parker

36939

Moore-Love, Karla

From: Susan Millhauser [susanm@spiretech.com]
Sent: Tuesday, June 26, 2012 1:43 PM
To: Adams, Mayor; Commissioner Fish; Commissioner Fritz; Leonard, Randy; Commissioner Saltzman
Cc: Moore-Love, Karla
Subject: Agenda Item 785 - Arts education and access resolution should include public charter schools

Dear Mayor Adams and Commissioners,

I am writing in regard to agenda item 785 - Refer Portland City Code Changes to Title 3 and Title 5 regarding arts education and access to City voters at the November 6, 2012 General Election ballot, which you will be considering at your June 27 Council meeting.

I applaud the City and its CAN partners for exploring innovative solutions to funds the arts and music in our public schools. However, as a parent of two PPS charter students, **I was very disappointed to learn that the proposal specifically excludes public charter school students from accessing these funds, if approved.** Why specifically exclude a small percentage of PPS students from receiving the benefits from these funds? I see in the resolution that charter schools would not be required to teach art and music. However, it is clear that all K-5 students would benefit from consistently funded art and music instruction, and I want my children and their peers to have equal access and opportunity.

Why would the City Council want to deny access to the arts for a small percentage of the K-5 students in Portland's public charter schools? Is this something the PPS board asked for? This makes no sense...especially as public charter schools in PPS are already operating on a slimmer budget / per-pupil funding formula than our neighborhood school counterparts.

I would be very disappointed that my kids and their peers will not have the same arts and music opportunity as every other PPS K-5 student. This is wrong and should be rectified!!

BTW, I plan to vote in favor of the upcoming PPS bond measure even though PPS public charters will not receive any benefit. It's for the good of all students, our neighborhoods, and the broader Portland community. Arts funding should be the same!

Thank you for consideration.

Susan Millhauser
5834 NE 23rd Ave
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June 26, 2012

6/26/2012

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Moore-Love, Karla

From: Jim McLaughlin [jjim.mclaughlin@gmail.com]**Sent:** Tuesday, June 26, 2012 10:24 AM**To:** Adams, Sam; Commissioner Fish; Commissioner Fritz; Leonard, Randy; Moore-Love, Karla; Commissioner Saltzman**Subject:** Per Capita Arts Tax

Folks -

The "Arts Tax" is a non starter.

Not only is it unconstitutional under the Oregon Constitution, it is administratively unworkable.

More importantly, though, funding arts teachers in the Dunthorpe grade school, and paying welfare to artists is not a core city mission or responsibility.

You are each urged to just say "No".

If you want to work on the nitty gritty of schools funding, there are lots of openings each year for school board elections in each of the 6 districts in the city. Run for one.

In the interim, please pay attention to actual core city missions and programs.

I'd appreciate a response from each of you.

Thank you.

Jim McLaughlin
4601 SW Vesta Street
Portland, OR
97219-7340

503 333 4329

36939

Moore-Love, Karla

From: tony@milagrosboutique.com
Sent: Tuesday, June 26, 2012 10:21 AM
To: Commissioner Fish; Commissioner Fritz; dan@ci.portland.or.us; Leonard, Randy; Adams, Sam
Cc: Moore-Love, Karla
Subject: Proposed Art Funding Income Tax
June 26, 2012

Honorable City Council Members,

Thank you for taking the initiative to craft solutions for our on-going challenges with funding for arts and other core fundamentals for effective education and development of a creative and effective local work force. I am writing today to ask that you amend the proposal to ensure that public charter schools receive a fair share of this potential funding source. At present, the proposal discriminates against these public schools that already must struggle for funds.

Charter school families are not more affluent than families at other public schools, charter schools families value arts education as much as families at other public schools, and charter school families will be paying the same tax as other Portland families if this proposal passes in November.

Generally, speaking, the Council should ensure that any city tax or fee is applied and used in a manner that is fair, equitable, and reasonable. An amendment of the arts tax proposal to ensure that charter schools are awarded funding at the same level as other public schools is in line with this simple expectation. Your immediate action to ensure fairness in the arts fund proposal is very welcome.

Please contact me at 971-570-6930 if you have any questions.

All the best,

Tony Fuentes
6504 NE 22nd Avenue
Portland, OR 97211

6/26/2012