

December 5, 2018

Word Count 208

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QuickPoint! – Fake Leadership

By John A. Charles, Jr.

Governor Kate Brown's proposed two-year general fund budget for 2019-21 requests \$23.6 billion. That is an increase of 12.4% over the current level, which was the largest budget in Oregon history when it was adopted 18 months ago.

So far, few legislative leaders have questioned why the Governor needs so much money. At the Oregon Business Plan summit, held on December 3, most of the talk was about adopting new taxes and repealing the popular "kicker" law that rebates surplus funds to Oregon taxpayers. That's not a good omen.

Most parents teach their children at a young age that they can't always ask for more; sometimes you have to make do with what you have. That lesson has been lost on Oregon's political leaders. No matter how much money we send to Salem, it's never enough.

Before legislators vote to approve even one more tax, they should ask where the money will go, and why is it needed? And more importantly, if the current record-setting budget is not enough, what will change in the next two years to avoid another huge increase in 2020?

Any governor can demand more money; addressing the root causes of our problems takes real leadership. Gov. Brown has yet to figure that out.

John A. Charles, Jr. is President and CEO of Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon's free market public policy research organization.