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QuickPoint! – Portland Has Highest Income Taxes in the U.S.: Are We Getting Our Money’s Worth?

By Eric Fruits, Ph.D.

This year, Oregon passed a major milestone. In 2020, Portland became the city with the highest personal income taxes in the United States.

The news was delivered this week in [testimony](#) to the Oregon Legislature. The State Tax Research Institute reported that state and local income taxes in Portland total nearly 14% — a rate that’s higher than San Francisco or New York.

That means the average Portland resident must work almost two months just to pay their state and local taxes.

Are we getting our money’s worth? It sure doesn’t seem like it.

- Do we have great schools? No. We have the fifth [worst](#) graduation rate in the country.
- Do we have flourishing businesses? No. Over the past few years it seems more businesses are leaving than arriving.
- A lot of our taxes go to the Oregon Health Plan. Do we have great health care? According to U.S. News and World Report, our state [ranks](#) near the bottom in adult and child wellness visits as well as child dental visits.

Now that we have record shattering tax rates, it’s time for us to ask: When will we get our money’s worth?

Eric Fruits, Ph.D. is Vice President of Research at Cascade Policy Institute, Oregon’s free market public policy research center.