

Proposals headed for November ballot

By Kristena Hansen
Associated Press

PORTLAND (AP) — Citizen groups have handed the final signatures for ballot initiatives to the Oregon Secretary of State, which has until early August to determine which proposals make the cut for the November ballot.

So far, only one proposal — the Initiative Petition 28 corporate tax measure — has made the ballot, while five others are pending as the state verifies signatures.

Five are statutory initiatives, which amend state law and therefore can be changed any time; one is a constitutional initiative, which amends the state Constitution and therefore requires voter approval for any changes thereafter. Statutory initiatives require 88,184 valid signatures and constitutional initiatives require 117,578.

Here's a summary of the citizen proposals:

IP 28: A Better Oregon: Raises an estimated \$3 billion in additional tax revenue each year broadly earmarked for public education, health care and senior services through the largest corporate tax hike in Oregon history. The state's largest 1,000 businesses registered as C-corporations with at least \$25 million in annual sales would pay a minimum

\$30,000 tax, plus a so-called gross receipts tax of 2.5 percent on any sales above that threshold.

As one of five states without a sales tax and some of the nation's lowest corporate taxes, Oregon's tax base depends heavily on personal income. IP 28's public union-backers say a tax hike on big business would make things more equitable and help restore some of the recession-era funding cutbacks to key public services. Businesses say it'd deal a blow to the local economy and consumer prices, while conservative lawmakers call it a "blank check" to the government.

Who's behind it: Our Oregon, a political advocacy nonprofit mostly funded by public employee unions; \$338,100 raised, mostly from Our Oregon, which hasn't disclosed the sources of its contributions

Signatures pending

IP 65: Oregonians For High School Success: Diverts \$140 million of annual state funds, or \$800 per high school student, to a newly created fund for high school career and technical education. Requires schools to submit plans for relevant programs and funding to the state education department and specifies how to measure performance and hold educators accountable.

Oregon has one of the

nation's worst high school graduation rates, and the initiative's supporters want to turn that around by boosting vocational programs, which often appeal to students who aren't bound for a four-year university and incentivize them to stay in school. Critics such as the Oregon Education Association, among the biggest backers of IP 28, say it's a "one-size-fits-all" solution that places a bandage over a broader problem.

Who's behind it: Stand for Children, a national education reform nonprofit partly supported by the Walton family and Bill and Melinda Gates; \$4.2 million raised, mostly from Stand for Children, which hasn't disclosed the sources of its contributions

IP 50: Voter Privacy Act: Bans the release of a registered voter's personal information without their written consent.

Currently, Oregon voters' personal data — such as birth dates, email addresses and phone numbers — and information on whether they've received or mailed in their ballots ahead of Election Day are public information. The initiative's supporters want to limit the information available to political campaigns, while critics such as public union SEIU Local 503 say it'd dampen ongoing efforts to boost voter turnout.

Who's behind it: Richard

Whitehead, an Aloha resident and Libertarian party member; \$167,300 raised, largely from the Taxpayers Association of Oregon

IP 49: No More Fake Emergencies Act: Requires a two-thirds supermajority vote by the Oregon Legislature in order to include emergency clauses on bills.

Emergency clauses accelerate a bill's effective date — usually 90 days after signing into law — and subsequently prevent citizens from challenging it by referendum. IP 49 backers say the clauses are being overused by the Oregon Legislature, where more than half of the bills had emergency provisions last year.

Who's behind it: Eric Winters, a Wilsonville attorney, and Jason Williams, executive director of the Taxpayer Association of Oregon; \$562,400 raised, largely from the Taxpayers Association.

IP 68: Save Endangered Animals: Makes it illegal to buy or sell parts and products made from 12 wildlife species in Oregon, such as cheetahs, elephants and sea turtles. Includes exceptions for certain antique items and tribal members, among others.

It's already illegal in the U.S. to import endangered animal parts and products,

but there's no law in Oregon banning sales and purchases of items already smuggled into the country. IP 68's backers say Oregon would follow states such as California, Hawaii and Washington state that have passed similar bans on animal parts.

Who's behind it: U.S. Rep. Earl Blumenauer, D-Portland; former GOP state Sen. Bruce Starr; Metro Council President Tom Hughes; \$520,500 raised, largely from the Humane Society

IP 67: Outdoor School for All: Gives fifth- or sixth-graders in Oregon one week of outdoor education by setting aside 4 percent of lottery funds not to exceed \$22 million annually.

Outdoor School has been a Portland-area tradition since the 1960s that's funded by nearby school districts, although has struggled with financial stability in recent years. Lawmakers expanded outdoor education statewide last year, but without funding. IP 67's backers are therefore eyeing lottery revenue, which critics say is already limited.

Who's behind it: Save Outdoor School For All, a grassroots coalition of outdoor advocates, parents and educators; \$61,500 raised, mostly from the coalition.

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