

Oregon keeps sanctuary law

By Gillian Flaccus
Associated Press

PORTLAND (AP) — Oregon rejected a chance to step to the right on hot-button social issues from abortion limits to immigration policy in an election that also swept incumbent Democratic Gov. Kate Brown to victory.

Brown was reelected after a tight race that kindled GOP hopes of a flip in the state that hasn't had a Republican in the top job for decades.

Voters on Tuesday turned back an attempt to repeal the state's first-in-the-nation sanctuary law and rejected a measure that would have banned the state's Medicaid program from covering abortions for low-income women.

The defeat of the measure involving abortion coverage came as voters in Alabama passed an amendment to the state constitution recognizing the rights of unborn fetuses and West Virginia approved a measure that prohibits Medicaid from funding abortions.

Oregon is the only state that has not added restrictions on abortion since the procedure became legal in the U.S. in 1973. Oregon voters previously rejected measures

to limit access to abortions, including in 1978, 1986 and 2006.

Still, abortion rights advocates had been worried about Measure 106 and poured energy into defeating it.

"In light of the national situation, I couldn't be more proud of our state," said Grayson Dempsey, executive director of NARAL Pro-Choice Oregon. "Oregonians showed up for reproductive rights access and made it very clear that we will not back down."

The high-profile ballot questions drove turnout, which helped Brown ride comfortably to re-election amid concerns about a tight race with GOP challenger Knute Buehler. Democrats also won a supermajority in the state Legislature.

Democrats hold a registration advantage of 10 percentage points statewide. While Buehler won by large margins in rural counties in eastern Oregon, Democrats overwhelmingly turned out for Brown in the Portland metropolitan area.

"We came close to losing the progress that we've worked so very hard for," an ebullient Brown said of the sanctuary and abortion

measures during her victory speech late Tuesday. "Thanks to ... the voters of this great state, we're going to keep Oregon a shining beacon of hope."

The only statewide ballot measure to pass will make it easier for government entities to finance and build much-needed affordable housing.

Measure 103 to ban future grocery taxes was seen by many as a pre-emptive strike against a statewide soda tax. Grocery giants and the beverage industry unsuccessfully poured millions of dollars into the campaign.

But many voters simply saw it as another attempt at a sales tax in the state that doesn't have one and has consistently rejected such a levy.

Former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg donated \$1.5 million to the campaign against the grocery tax ban, energizing opponents.

Voters also rejected a measure that would have required a legislative supermajority to approve bills that raise revenue in any way — not just through taxes.

Rescuers aid injured hiker at Smith Rock

Rescuers brought an injured hiker down off Misery Ridge in a litter on Sunday, November 11, after the woman's brother reported that Krystal Cuffley had sustained a non-life-threatening injury that prevented her from hiking down the Misery Ridge Trail at Smith Rock State Park.

Redmond Fire responded to the 35-year-old hiker's location and evaluated her injuries. Redmond Fire requested Deschutes

County Sheriff's Office SAR Volunteers respond with a wheeled litter to transport Cuffley down the trail. Eleven Deschutes county Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue Volunteers hiked up Misery ridge and assisted Cuffley down the trail in the wheeled litter where she was further evaluated by Redmond Fire.

Cuffley, who hails from Hanover, Pennsylvania, chose to stay with family and seek further medical attention on her own.



PHOTO COURTESY DSCO

Redmond Fire and Deschutes County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue personnel aided an injured hiker at Smith Rock last weekend.

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