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Guns readied for Measure 6 showdown

Boe promises info for limit discussion

By KEVIN HARDEN
Of the Emerald

The furor over Oregon's controversial property tax limitation measure, is beginning to spread, but the legislature should stay out of the fight, Senate Pres. Jason Boe said Friday.

No matter what happens, the Legislature should stick to the facts about November's Measure 6 and leave the emotional rhetoric to the soap box, Boe said. But legislators would be deaf if they did not hear a message out of the tax revolt.

"There's no question that the voters are trying to give leaders a message," he admitted. "And that is to watch how they spend the tax dollars."

Speaking at a meeting of the Lane County Labor Forum, Boe termed the tax limitation a "bullet" that has pierced the armor of state and local government.

"It's my strong opinion that the bullet loaded into the Jarvis-Gann (California tax limitation leaders) gun in California has passed through the body of state government and is heading straight toward Washington, D.C.," Boe said.

Congress is to blame for a lot of the problems faced by taxpayers today, he added. Unchecked federal spending, a budget based on a huge deficit and too many worthless programs have contributed to double-digit inflation, he said.

"Congress is the ultimate destination of the Jarvis-Gann measure," Boe said. "The people are just grabbing at local government because they can right now."

Grabbing local government by the throat may not solve the problem however. Boe says the only way to have real tax reform is to hit the federal government. And that is exactly what he intends to do.

Boe, who was in Lane County for two days to attend the Bach Choral Festival, will be leaving next week for Washington, D.C., to testify before a congressional committee. While in the nation's capital, he intends to deliver one simple message: cut federal spending.

Only when the federal government cuts its spending and reduces its budget will the taxpayers of Oregon, California and every other state, see a real improvement in the economy, Boe said.

Until that happens, the fight over Oregon's Measure 6 will continue. But a state government should stay away from an emotional battle over the issue, because it may go the way of the California Legislature, he speculated.

Public opinion was evenly divided over that state's Proposition 13 until their legislature started a campaign based on the "doomsday" theory, according to Boe. Within four weeks of that campaign, public opinion shifted to nearly double the support for the measure.

Why such a shift in support? Because the combined efforts of the legislature, state labor parties and other political groups made the campaign appear to be a "big government versus the little man" fight. And Boe thinks Oregon should learn from California's mistakes.

"The people weren't ready to believe government and business and labor and all their doomsday talk."

To guard against that, Boe and the State Revenue Office are preparing a "massive" tax information campaign scheduled to begin in August.

That campaign will give each taxpayer a computer print-out showing what will happen to that area if Measure 6 is approved in November.

"We want them to be able to plug the tax formula in and see how it (the tax limitation) will affect them," he said. "But we must have factual information right now, because the proponents of the measure are not giving out good information."

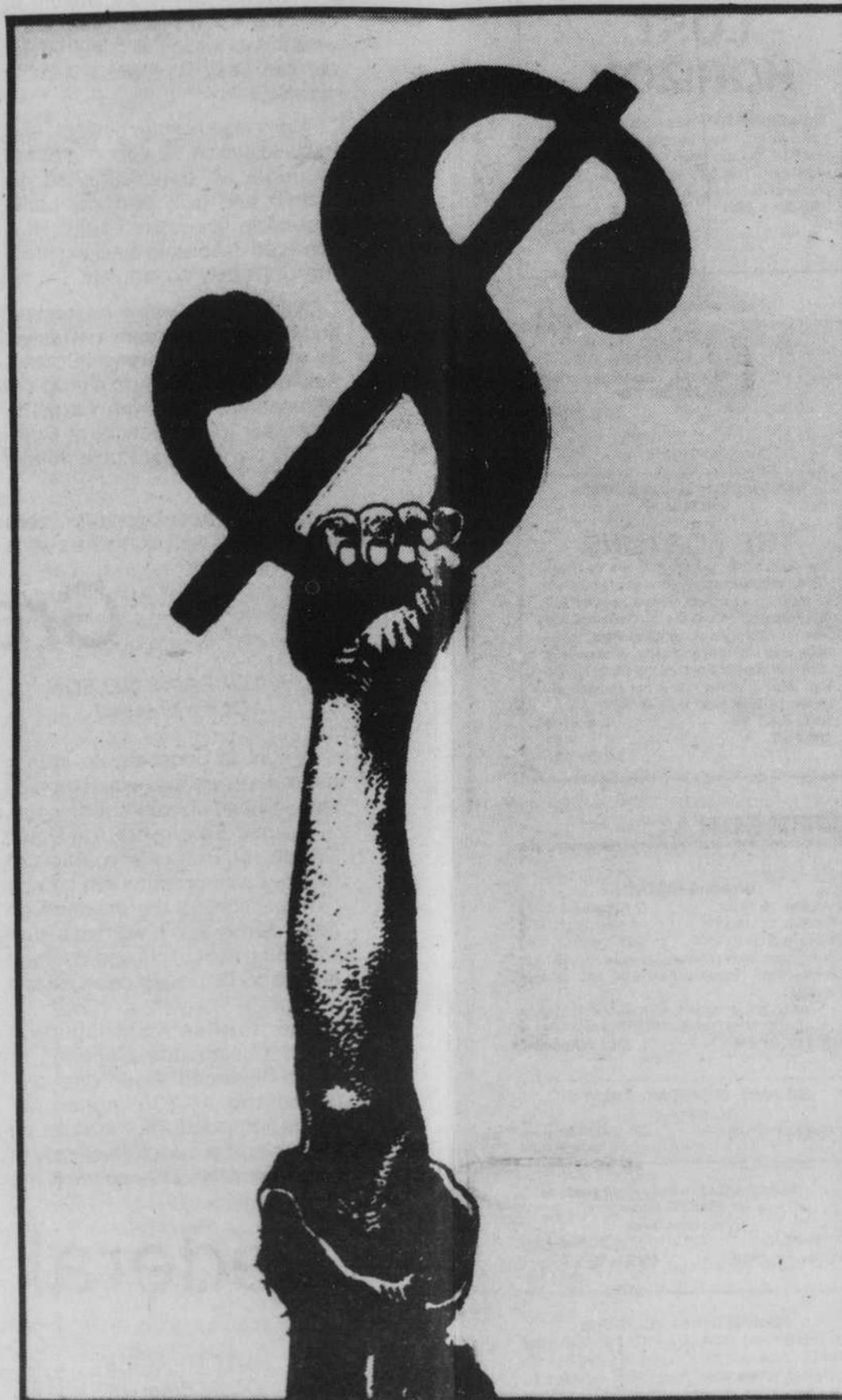
If Measure 6 is approved, the Legislature may be forced to push for a sales tax or raise state income taxes to make up for the lost revenue, Boe said. Although state voters have turned down repeated efforts to implement a sales tax, one might be needed to keep state services functioning.

Local control may also be hurt if the measure is approved, Boe noted. Money that is now generated by tax revenues to run essential civic services would have to come from somewhere else. Maybe outside the Legislature.

"I think that the people understand the services they are now getting on the local level would have to come from Salem, or worse yet, Washington, D.C., if the limitation passes."

If Measure 6 isn't approved, Boe said the Legislature would begin consideration of two tax relief programs. One program would hold government spending to the Consumer Price Index. The other would limit property taxes to just three percent of the adjusted gross income of the taxpayer.

Although the programs would aid the taxpayer, they would mean the end of the state's Homeowner and Renter Relief Program, which would have to be dismantled to provide funding for them, Boe pointed out.



Emerald graphic

Weaver: Capitol Hill must hear the complaints

By KEVIN HARDEN
Of the Emerald

Other people may talk about tax reform, but Jim Weaver, D-Eugene, takes budget cuts seriously. At least that's what he said Friday.

Weaver, who was in Eugene to meet with area voters and report how work is going in Congress, told reporters that tax revolt fever has reached Washington, D.C.

Congress may not get the message behind California's Proposition 13, but he's been trying to cut the federal budget for several years, Weaver said.

Although he has yet to take a position on Oregon's Measure 6, Weaver said his congressional voting record is a testimony to his support of tax reform.

"People have reached the end of their limits," he declared. "They demand cuts in the budget and they're going to have to get them."

"The major theme in Congress today is cutting the budget. The people demand it and inflation makes it essential."

Out of 10 appropriations bills that have reached the house of representatives for a vote, Weaver has voted to cut money from nine budgets. So far, those cuts have been selective and not a "meat axe" approach, he said.

But there may be times when a meat axe is necessary to make a federal program work correctly.

"We know there's waste in government and overpayment so we just cut the whole program across the board in order to force the



Jim Weaver

program's administrator to cut spending."

While Victor Atiyeh, Republican Nominee for governor, and Senate Pres. Jason Boe characterized California's property tax limitation as a "bullet" aimed at the federal government, Weaver said he was just as "fast on the draw" as the tax revolutionaries.

"I'm a pretty good gunslinger myself, and I'm as fast on the draw when it comes to cuts to the federal budget."

Government spending must be cut drastically, Weaver said. Until cuts are made, the people will be frustrated and take their anger out on local government.

"The revolt of the people is being heard and will continue to be heard in Congress," he said.

Rep endorses tax limitation as war against government overspending

By KEVIN HARDEN
Of the Emerald

Some call it a revolution. Some even call it the taxpayers' last stand. But Rep. Al Shaw, R-Roseburg, calls it war.

Shaw, a leader of Oregon's property tax limitation petition, said Friday the tax measure on the November general election ballot will be the "big stick" the state's taxpayers will use to regain control of their government.

Speaking at a gathering of Lane County Republicans, Shaw said Oregon's Measure 6 was the only alternative the state's voters had to keep their homes and cut state spending. People are mad, and the one-and-one-half percent tax limitation is the only vehicle they have to vent their anger, he said.

Shaw's involvement in the limitation initiative petition drive began nearly two years ago during his first session at the Legislature. State government wouldn't help the taxpayer then, so the people had to take matters into their own hands, he said.

Following Jim Whittenburg, a Portland lobbyist who began the initiative petition drive to place the tax limitation measure on the November ballot,

Shaw rallied Southern Oregon taxpayers into a signature gathering force. Less than three months and 200,000 signatures later, Shaw, Whittenburg and several other petition leaders brought their plan to the voters.

It's up to the voters now, he observed. But Shaw allowed that the tax fight won't end when the votes are tabulated in November. After property taxes, the people will attack government spending.

"You're participating in one of the greatest internal struggles this country has seen in 200 years," Shaw said. "The real battle is between the people and the government."

And the struggle for control is between an ever-expanding bureaucracy and the people, Shaw added. And it may be only a matter of time before the people regain control of their government.

"This struggle has been going on for years," he said. "But it surfaced recently when people found a vehicle they could ride on that was pointed in the right direction."

Shaw said the tax limitation was the last alternative left to the voters. Elected officials haven't listened to pleas to cut taxes and expenditures, so the people had to take drastic steps.

"The people have been frustrated and helpless and politically impotent over the years and they are now venting their anger."

Measure 6, Shaw said, is a weapon to be used by voters to get control of their government.

"This initiative is a club; not a very smooth or symmetric club, like a baseball bat, but like a piece of firewood. And people are grabbing it and running with it."

That "club" will be used to first beat down taxes, and then beat down spending, he said.

"The simple conviction behind the tax limitation is to make less money available for government to spend. If elected officials lack the courage to say no to spending, then the people will have to do it through the initiative process."

Although the measure has been called a "mine field" of legal problems, Shaw said the flaws are "insignificant" and can be worked out by a "responsible" Legislature.

"Out of all this will come good management," he predicted. "People will begin to see the management and begin to realize that they are the dominant force."

"This isn't radical, it is a common sense assertion by people to restore Americanism and the freedoms that lives were spent for in our wars."

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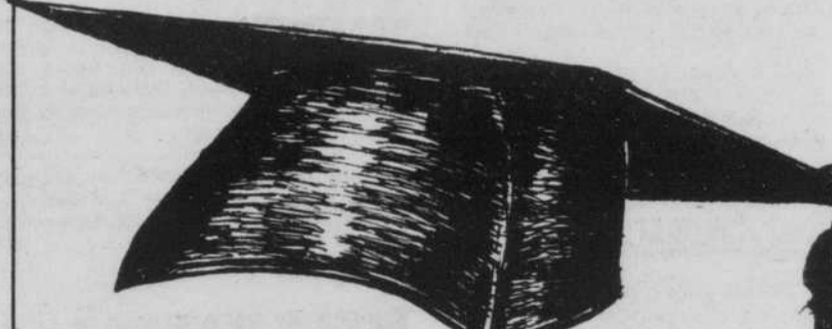
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