

# Demos oppose Measure Republicans delay stand

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Of the Emerald

If you're a Democrat, you're against it. If you're a Republican, you're still undecided.

At least that's how official party lines are being drawn over Oregon's Ballot Measure 6.

While the fight over the controversial property tax limitation begins to take shape, both major political parties are sharpening their efforts to win the support of state voters. So far, the Democrats hope to do that by opposing the measure. The Republicans have yet to make up their minds.

During the Democratic Party's picnic meeting Sunday afternoon, members voted to add a resolution to the party platform that condemns the long-term effects of Measure 6.

That resolution, which focuses on the shift of the tax burden from business properties to homeowners, clearly points to the dissatisfaction with the measure's intent.

That dissatisfaction may alienate some of the 200,000 voters who signed the initiative petition to put the one-and-one-half percent property tax limitation measure on the November ballot. But the party isn't worried about that, says Jim Klonoski, state Democratic Party chair.

"By taking any position in politics you tend to alienate some people; that's what politics are all about," Klonoski says.

The Democratic Party approaches politics on an issue-by-issue basis, Klonoski explains, and not on how many votes the

party will lose by disapproving of one of nearly a dozen measures.

The resolution says the party will not support Measure 6 because it would increase federal income taxes, shift the burden of property taxes onto the private homeowner and disrupt the education system of the state. It speaks for the party in the upcoming election, Klonoski says.

While Klonoski doesn't think the resolution will hurt the party's support, Rosemary Batori, head of the Lane County Democratic Central Committee, thinks a loss of voters is a real possibility.

The only way the party will win against 200,000 petition signatures will be to begin a "tremendous" educational campaign about the measure's real effects, Batori says.

The party's resolution could alienate some voters because it might make the Democratic Party look like a political machine about to steamroll over public opinion, she says. But that doesn't mean she disagrees with the resolution.

"A lot of people don't like to be told how to vote," Batori says. And a political campaign based on emotion and not fact will do more to hurt the party than anything else.

"We won't be able to argue every detail of the measure, so what we may do is buy space in newspapers and run advertisements pinpointing specific effects of the measure."

The Lane County Democratic organization will probably run a person-to-person campaign against Measure 6 beginning the end of the summer, she says.

But that campaign won't be a debate with the opposition. It will be an information campaign

based on facts about the measure the opposition failed to provide to the petition signers.

"Sometimes the best way to go about it is not to put on a big campaign, but to line the opposition up against you and compare the two," Batori says.

The Democrats may have decided their stance, but the Republicans are delaying any decision until "all the facts are in," says Mike O'Brien, head of the Lane County Republican Party.

That may appear to be "waffling" on the issue, but it is just the opposite, O'Brien says.

Party members from 10 Oregon counties met last week in Roseburg to discuss the effects of Measure 6, O'Brien says. The conclusion the group reached about the measure may surprise some voters.

"There is quite a division among some people in the party on how to go on this measure," O'Brien explains. "There's a whole bundle of things that need to be cleared up before any decision can be made."

Although the Multnomah County Republican Central Committee voted overwhelmingly to support the initiative petition last month, O'Brien says the entire party might not follow their example.

"The Multnomah County organization is a unique group," he says. "They aren't necessarily representative of the party as a whole."

O'Brien says the party won't make a clear statement about the measure until after its state convention in Bend August 7. There is speculation the party might support the measure, but only to a degree, he says.



"There is quite a lot of opposition to the way the measure is written," he says. "But I have a feeling that the decision may be somewhat surprising."

The party leadership is concerned with the future implications of the measure and won't take a stand until those apprehensions are cleared up, O'Brien says.

"There is a lot of popular demand for it so both parties may support it to some degree."

Regardless of the outcome in November, the Republican Party will continue to press the state

Legislature for a tax reform package during the next session, O'Brien says. That reform will be "creative and soundly defined," rather than an "emotional response" to the tax structure, he adds.

"I have a feeling that the party may be pushing for tax reform for a long time," O'Brien says. "This measure may be the way to do it. They may be wholeheartedly for it, I don't know. But there are a lot of questions about it that need to be cleared up before it goes down on paper as law."

## Worker

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month to organize injured workers around the state, said Green's interest in the insurance company is a clear conflict of interest and that Green should resign his position.

Blair first called for Green's resignation July 4 in a news story broadcast by KEZI-TV. Blair said Green's interest in the insurance company was costing the state's businesses money and cheating the injured workers out of what was rightfully theirs.

The Workers' Compensation Board has also wasted millions of dollars a year by sending injured workers out of state for medical examinations, Blair said.

Blair, who challenged Straub and Green to meet him on KEZI-TV to debate the conflict of interest charges, said a meeting scheduled for July between Green and leaders of four major labor unions in the state would probably result in Green's resignation.

Those rumors are not true, says Siegest. The meeting with labor leaders hasn't been held, and Green hasn't made any move to resign, he says.

"As far as I know Roy Green will continue to be the director of the Workers' Compensation Department at least through this next year," Siegest says.

Oregon Daily Emerald

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