

Republicans discuss sales tax

SEASIDE (AP) — Most Republicans at the annual Dorchester Conference believe a sales tax would be the answer to Oregon's school funding problems.

Those attending the weekend GOP event cast straw ballots on five advisory school finance measures put on the May 15 primary election ballot by a legislative committee.

Two of the proposals urge adoption of sales taxes to replace most or all property taxes for schools.

Two other measures would boost state income taxes for the same purpose, and the fifth measure asks whether voters want any change in the current school funding system.

The Dorchester participants overwhelmingly called for reform on the latter question, voting 279-9 to change the present arrangement.

Of the four tax proposals the only one approved by the conference was a 4 percent sales tax on most goods. It would raise about \$900 million a year, while cutting school property

taxes on homes and businesses by an average of 50 percent.

The proposal was endorsed by a vote of 188-92.

The 5 percent sales tax proposal was defeated 176-92.

That tax would apply to both goods and services, raise \$1.8 billion a year and eliminate all property taxes for schools.

The two proposed income tax increase measures were crushed by the Republican conference.

A measure to raise the top rate from 9 percent to 10.4 percent to cut in half school property taxes on homes was trounced on a vote of 267-10.

An advisory measure that would raise the top rate to 14 percent for some taxpayers to eliminate school property taxes on homes was defeated 265-8.

The sales tax proposal that won conference approval was endorsed by John Danielson, lobbyist for The Oregon Education Association.

Danielson told the conference that he thinks the sales tax is the best answer to school funding because the tax will af-

fect the greatest number of people able to pay.

As the population ages, he said, the number of income earners will shrink.

Former Secretary of State Norma Paulus, who is running for the non-partisan post of state school superintendent, also said the sales tax is the best answer to revamping school funding. But she said to persuade voters of that, the tax rate must be put in the state constitution so it can't be changed by the legislature.

Paulus said she favors a provision requiring any tax passed by the legislature to be referred to the voters in two to three years to decide whether or not it should be continued.

Conference officials said about 560 people registered to attend this year's gathering, which was founded by U.S. Sen. Bob Packwood when he was a state legislator 26 years ago. The conference is not an official Republican party function.

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years as Co-chair of the Governor's Science Council, a group established to aid Oregon businesses and create new ones through Oregon based research," Lonsdale said.

Lonsdale refused to characterize himself as a politician.

"I've never run for a political office before... I'm not a politician — never have been and don't plan to become one. Politicians are those folks who have a way of telling it either way, depending on where they think you stand. Well, one thing I'm about is straight talk. And that's what this campaign is about," Lonsdale said.

Among those present at Lonsdale's announcement in Eugene was fellow Democratic nominee Neale Hyatt of Pleasant Hill.

Hyatt questioned Lonsdale's wisdom in running a "two-issue campaign that focuses mainly on abortion and timber."



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