

POLITICS

Measure 7 would establish trial work-for-welfare program

By Rene DeCair
Emerald Reporter

Proponents claim it would break dependency cycle

If Ballot Measure 7 is passed in the Nov. 6 elections, Oregon's 282,000 welfare and food stamp recipients would lose their public assistance benefits.

The measure, on the ballot by initiative petition, would mean people who normally receive benefits from the food stamp program or Aid for Families with Dependent Children would no longer receive this assistance. Instead they would work at government-funded jobs for 90 percent of the mini-

mum wage.

The initiative, which would be a trial three-year pilot program for six counties in the state, would also eliminate the unemployment compensation program. If after three years the move proved successful in the trial counties, the program would become permanent and mandatory for all of Oregon's 36 counties.

However, before the program can be implemented, the state Legislature would need to petition Congress to get exemp-

tions and waivers from federal laws that require public assistance programs be made available to the public.

Measure 7 proponents argue the program will not only give welfare recipients a sense of self-worth by working for their money, but people will also gain specific job skills, equipping them for better jobs in the future.

"It's good for (recipients) and good for the country," said Nick Thompson, a supporter of the measure who wrote an ar-

gument in favor in the Oregon Voters' Pamphlet.

"Work habits and work skills are just as important as technical skills," Thompson said, adding that with any job "you gain punctuality and sociability."

But the measure's opponents, the No on 7 Committee, said the initiative will only trap workers in the sub-minimum wage jobs because they would have to spend all their time at work, preventing them from taking time for schooling or to

look for other jobs.

"Putting people to work flipping hamburgers at 90 percent of the minimum wage isn't going to help at all," said Anne Taliaferro, spokeswoman for the No on 7 Committee. She believes people need education.

Taliaferro said the Family Support Act, which went into effect on Oct. 1, is a better solution for ending people's dependency on welfare programs because it helps them deal with their substance abuse problems and provides them with job-finding skills and other basic

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Kelly & Julie

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Antonio: Promises, promises...
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dime el dia... Pensando en ti, D.

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I screamed when I got you. Can't wait
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