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POLITICS

Candidates divided on funding

By Joe Kidd
Emerald Politics Editor

Oregon's four gubernatorial candidates all say they place a high priority on higher education. But when it comes to finding the dollars for that priority, their proposals fall all across the board.

Within the debate of why and how to tax Oregonians, the candidates take varying positions on Ballot Measure 5 — a property tax-limiting initiative that may take up to \$120 million from the state's higher education system over the next two years, with that figure possibly rising to more than \$900 million by 1997.

See related story p.12

Democrat Barbara Roberts and Republican Dave Frohnmayer, the neck-and-neck leaders in most pre-election polls, have both specifically called for faculty salary increases, and both have made sales tax proposals for solving Oregon's property tax-elementary school funding woes.

Roberts and Frohnmayer support a \$50 million increase for faculty salaries. Roberts has labeled higher education funding her "number one priority," and Frohnmayer has claimed that he was the first to make it a priority in the election campaigning.

As for their tax proposals, Roberts and Frohnmayer strongly oppose Measure 5.

Roberts has called for a 5 percent sales tax, shifting K-12 public school funding completely onto the state's general fund.

Frohnmayer, however, has proposed a 4 percent sales tax that would be tied to a 1.5 percent property tax limit, instead of supporting Measure 5. He opposes the initiative, predicting it would create a "drop-everything crisis" if passed.

Libertarian Fred Oerther and independent Al Mobley, on the other hand, see the Republican and Democratic candidates as one-and-the-same on the issue of taxes. Both Mobley and Oerther criticize the leading candidates as liberal spenders and say that taxes should be lowered instead of increased.

Although they both say they place a priority on higher education, neither Mobley nor Oerther has specific proposals for funding the state's universities and colleges.

Mobley, who received 11 percent of support in the most recent state-wide poll, said that Oregon needs to pay what it takes to hire quality faculty, but that "we cannot compete with New York or Southern California. But we need to at least be in the right range."

And while Oerther agrees faculty pay is important, he doesn't "have much sympathy. I understand that professors here are behind the average, but . . . I don't know of any professor that is starving," he said.

Mobley said he strongly supports Measure 5,

WHERE THEY STAND

HIGHER ED FUNDING



Frohnmayer proposes a \$50 million dollar increase in faculty salaries; opposes Measure 5; wants to modify the state's spending limit; calls for a 4 percent sales tax connected to 1.5 percent property tax limitation.

Republican

Mobley has no specific proposals but says faculty salaries are important, yet also says Oregon's favorable standards and costs of living must also be considered; supports Measure 5; wants to retain the spending limit; opposes all sales tax proposals.



Independent

Oerther has no specific proposal for higher education and faculty salaries but calls for general increase in support from state's general fund; proposes basic \$75,000 property value exemption from property tax instead of supporting Measure 5; opposes sales tax or any other tax increase and, instead, calls for huge federal tax cuts.



Libertarian

Roberts has called for a \$45 million faculty salary increase but now agrees with Gov. Neil Goldschmidt's \$50 million proposal; opposes Measure 5; wants to abolish the government spending limit; proposes a 5 percent sales tax except on certain goods and services.



Democrat

believing that "we must cap the spiraling costs of K-12 education in this state." He also opposes the idea of a sales tax.

Oerther calls for a \$75,000 basic property value tax exemption for homeowners instead of supporting Measure 5.

TKE

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