

ELECTIONS

Voters pass property tax limits, reject private school tax credits

By Robert Ward
Emerald Editorial Editor

With 73 percent of the precincts counted, **Ballot Measure 5**, a constitutional amendment that would set property tax limitations in increments over the next five years, was passing 52 percent to 48 percent.

Property taxes help fund many basic services including schools, police and fire departments, libraries, parks, ambulance service and road repairs.

State Sen. Grattan Kerans said replacing the lost revenue Measure 5 takes away will be the Legislature's number one priority.

"We have to find a fair and progressive solution to the problems" the passage of Measure 5 presents, he said.

Al and Mary Bradley, retired homeowners in Eugene, said they voted for Measure 5 because they "are sick and tired of being taxed to death. The Legislature can make it up through higher income taxes or a sales tax. Don't penalize homeowners."

Kerans said a sales tax is one avenue the Legislature will explore, but Oregon voters have consistently opposed it.

School funding is a big concern of opponents of Measure 5. Larry Warford, assistant to the president at Lane Community College, said the passage of Measure 5 could result in a \$5 million to \$6 million cutback at LCC over the next five years.

Besides the school funding issue, Kerans said he is concerned about funding for programs such as Adult and Family Services, alcohol and drug rehabilitation, and the Children's Services Division.

"We must be careful not to put all our eggs in one basket," he said. The state can't rely on any one tax or revenue source to make up the lost

monies because of Measure 5, he said.

Under Measure 5, school-related taxes would be slashed from the current levels of about \$20 per \$1,000 of assessed property value to \$5 per \$1,000 by 1995. Non-school taxes, mostly municipalities, counties and utilities, would be immediately limited to a total of \$10 per \$1,000.

The Legislature is required to make up the lost school revenue from Measure 5, but only for the first five years. It does not have to make up the lost revenue of cities, counties and non-taxing school districts.

This is the sixth property tax limitation measure in the past 12 years.

Ballot Measure 11, which would permit parents to choose which public school their children attend, was failing 70 percent to 30 percent with 85 percent of the precincts reporting. The measure would also allow families tax credits for sending their children to non-public schools.

Mary Wilson, a proponent of Measure 11, said parents should be able to send their kids "to a good school, instead of letting the state decide for them."

However, according to Sam Drucker, Measure 11 would "allow parents to send their kids to religious schools, which raises the (issue of) separation of church and state."

He said Oregonians clearly believe Measure 11 would divide schools into "good and bad."

But Wilson said schools are already that way so parents should be allowed to send their children to good schools.

Ballot Measure 2 would amend the constitution to allow school districts that merge to combine their tax bases without adding an automatic 6 percent. This measure was referred to the voters by the Legislature without any opposition. Measure 11 was leading with 85 percent of the precincts reporting 65 percent to 35 percent.

Seat belt, workfare measures pass

By Daralyn Trappe
Emerald Reporter

All Oregonians will be required to buckle up beginning Dec. 7 as a result of the passage of **Ballot Measure 9**.

The measure was passing 53 percent to 47 percent, with 73 percent of the statewide vote counted.

The law will require all drivers over the age of 16 to wear safety belts and to secure passengers under the age of 16 in a safety belt or child seat. All passengers over the age 16 will be required to secure themselves.

The measure also requires car owners to keep safety belts in working order. Drivers, owners or passengers who violate the law will be subject to Class D traffic infractions.

Privately owned commercial vehicles and other vehicles not required to have safety belts will be exempt, as will people who are issued a certificate of exemption.

"We expect this will save thousands of Oregonians from disabling injuries," said John Tongue of the Oregon Lifebelt Political Action Committee. "It's a very important public safety issue — it's rational and reasonable."

Oregonians rejected a similar referendum two years ago.

"I think it passed because of the volunteer efforts of over 2,000 people in the medical

community," Tongue said.

Measure 7, which appeared to be passing late Tuesday night, will establish a work program in which recipients of government-funded wages — such as welfare and unemployment benefits — will be required to work at jobs paying 90 percent of minimum wage in lieu of those benefits.

The three-year pilot program will be set up in three counties, to be determined at a later date, if it receives federal approval.

With 73 percent of the vote counted, the measure was passing 57 percent to 43 percent.

"It's too bad that people don't really understand what it does," said Anne Taliaferro of the No on 7 Committee.

No one from the proponent group, Oregonians for Full Employment, was available for comment.

Measure 3, which would have granted a tax exemption for members of the Public Employees Retirement System, was being defeated 60 percent to 40 percent with 73 percent of the ballots tallied.

"I think the reason it's not passing is because it's confusing," said supporter Jack Sollis. "The explanation is confusing, and anything that confuses voters, they'll turn down."

C.H. Buehler, of the opposition group Citizens for Tax Equity, said he believes the measure did not pass because it

would have established an unfair tax system.

"This sends a message to the Legislature that they need to come up with something better — a fair tax system for all employees, public and private," Buehler said.

The defeat of this measure, however, could force the state to refund \$36 million a year to federal employees.

As of late Tuesday night, **Measure 1** was still too close to call, with 52 percent in favor and 48 opposed after 73 percent of the votes were tabulated.

The measure would grant metropolitan service district electors the right to self-governance over metropolitan matters.

Greg McMurdo, of the proponent group Committee for Self-Governance, said he was not surprised by how close the vote was given the fact that it only affects districts in the Portland area.

"People can't figure it out," McMurdo said. "You have people voting statewide on an issue that doesn't affect them."

If it passes, voters in the districts will be allowed to establish their own charter, revise and amend it.

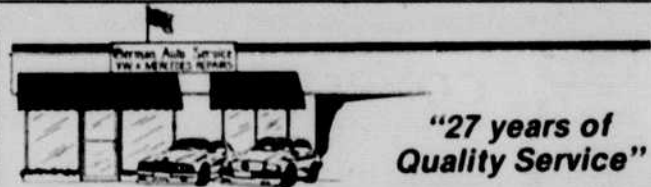
The governance of these areas "should be up to the voters of these districts rather than the state Legislature," he said.

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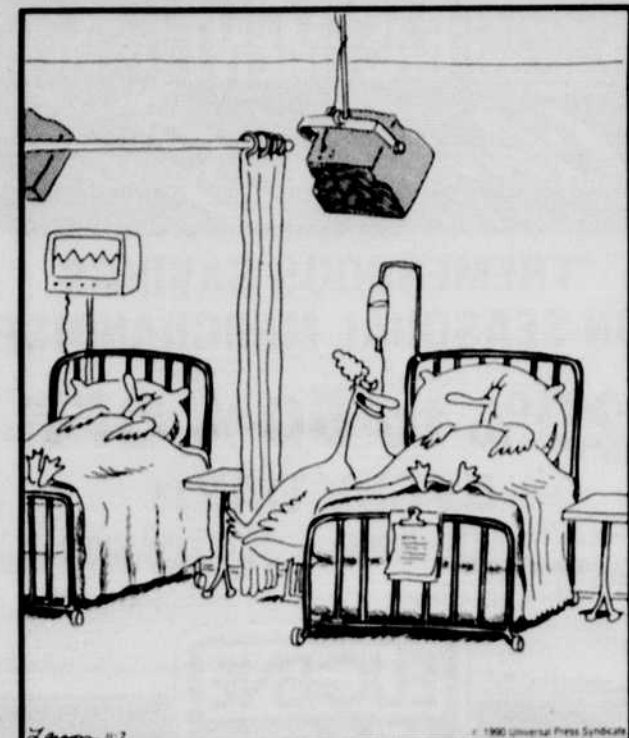
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THE FAR SIDE

By GARY LARSON



"It's just a miracle you pulled through, George. ...
Why, it was only a few hours ago the whole
family was deliberating on whether or not to
wring your neck."

GO DUCKS