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POLITICS

a voter's guide to the 1996 election and life on the campaign trail

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ISSUE: WELFARE

ON THE ISSUES

Question: Under the new welfare law, should all welfare recipients willing to work be guaranteed a job, training or other assistance from government if they cannot find employment covering basic living costs?



"We have a moral obligation to make sure the people who are being required to work have the opportunity to work. We must make sure the jobs are there. There should be one million new jobs for welfare recipients by the year 2000. States under this law can now take the money that was spent on the welfare check and use it to help businesses to provide paychecks. I challenge every state to do it soon."

—President Bill Clinton, Democratic candidate



"This legislation provides states with strong financial incentives to help welfare recipients get jobs or get the training they need for a well-paying job. This legislation also helps eliminate one of the biggest barriers for women who want to go to work — lack of child care — by providing almost \$14 billion for child care programs. Additionally [it] contains a safety net that allows states to exempt 20 percent of their caseload — the hardship cases — from the time limits."

—Bob Dole, Republican candidate



"Our government must help welfare recipients receive the tools they need to become productive taxpayers."

—Ross Perot, Reform Party candidate

—The Associated Press

Sponsor defends Measure 47

By Shana Cohn
 Politics Editor

Bill Sizemore, the author of Measure 47, says schools wouldn't suffer if the measure passed. The leader of Oregon Taxpayers United was recently interviewed about how schools and other services could be funded with a significant loss of property tax revenues. The Legislative Revenue Office says under Measure 47, schools would lose an estimated \$181 million in 1997-98, depending on the response of lawmakers.

ISSUE: School Funding

School funding has grown faster than the rate of inflation during the Measure 5 years, according to the OTU. Measure 5, which limited property taxes, passed in 1990.

Q. OTU says Measure 47 could also be enacted without any cuts to schools and other essential services. How would this work?

A. The legislature has to do one more time what they have done five years in a row with Measure 5. Take 100 percent of property tax reductions out of schools and backfill them with state income and lottery dollars. And take no cuts in local government, so local governments will have no reduction in property tax revenues. After one more year of Measure 5 is phased in, Measure 47 can be implemented with no loss to schools or local government.

ISSUE: Prisons

Q. What about the increased money that will need to come from the state general fund for the construction of prisons?

A. Fortunately the general fund is growing 20 percent or more per biennium. We have a window of opportunity to implement Measure 47 without cuts. We couldn't do that without a robust economy.

ISSUE: Taxes

Q. Why does Measure 47 target property taxes?

A. Property taxes are the most unfair tax in our overall system. They tax people without regard to ability to pay. This year, property taxes are going up four to six times the rate of inflation. That's a system that demands fixing.

BILL SIZEMORE

QUESTION & ANSWER

ISSUE: Benefits

Q. Who will benefit from Measure 47?

A. Homeowners. Commercial properties will only increase in value 2 to 3 percent a year, and will see little benefit from the measure. Residential property values are increasing 10 to 20 percent per year, and [owners] will greatly benefit from the 3 percent cap. [For the years following 1997-98, property taxes are limited to no more than 3 percent per year under the measure]. There's no way that the measure can benefit commercial property owners at the expense of homeowners.

Q. Who benefited from Measure 5?

A. Every property owner in Oregon. A lot of homeowners ignore what their property taxes would be today if Measure 5 was not in place. But most reductions went to commercial owners, which happened as a function of the real estate market.

ISSUE: Local Control

Q. What is the biggest misconception about Measure 47?

A. That it will hurt local control. The local control argument is a baseless scare tactic to divert voters attention away from property taxes. Measure 47, if anything, protects local control. It says that if any cuts are necessary, the losses have to be minimized. The measure mandates prioritizing public safety and education [when replacing lost revenue from property taxes].

ISSUE: Economy

Q. How would the measure affect the Oregon economy?

A. I believe a lot of the credit for Oregon's vibrant economy can be traced to Measure 5. It has left more than \$3 billion in the hands of taxpayers, with which they have purchased goods and services from Oregon businesses. Our philosophy is that reducing taxes stimulates economic expansion. It increases both the standard of living of citizens and revenues for government.

MEASURE 47

■ WHAT IT DOES: Limits the amount of property taxes that can be collected. Would roll back taxes to their 1994-95 level or cut them to 10 percent less than the 1995-96 level, whichever is smaller. Future tax rate growth would be limited to 3 percent per year, with exceptions. Would limit revenue available to schools and other local services funded by property taxes. That revenue could only be replaced by state income taxes, unless voters approve replacement fees or charges. Revenue reductions would be allocated in a way that makes public safety and education a priority. Property must be assessed at real market value.

■ ARGUMENTS FOR: Prevents property taxes from skyrocketing in the future. Lost revenue to schools and services could be made up with lottery funds or income taxes. Without this measure, the state's excess property taxes could go to increased state bureaucracy.

■ ARGUMENTS AGAINST: Local governments and schools could lose up to \$467 million together in 1997-98, and more than that in future years. The measure provides no means for replacing lost revenue. Hurts local control and eliminates the ability of communities to decide what level of services they want.

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ON THE BALLOT

A look at some of the 23 ballot measures in the November 5 election

THE MEASURE

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WHAT IT WOULD DO

Amends the Oregon Constitution to repeal certain residency requirements for state veteran loans. The Constitution currently requires that people seeking home or farm loans were Oregon residents when they entered military service or have resided here for five years since their discharge. The measure would leave other eligibility requirements intact.

ARGUMENTS FOR

Would allow the Oregon Veteran Home Loan Program to follow a Supreme Court ruling that found such residency requirements unfairly discriminates against service people who similarly served.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST

Forces the state to provide home and farm loans to veterans who were not residents of the state.

THE MEASURE

46

WHAT IT WOULD DO

Amends the state constitution. Under the current system, a law requires a majority vote of those voting to be passed. Under the measure, a law would require a majority of registered voters to be passed. A registered voter who does not vote is therefore counted as a "no" vote. The measure would also apply to taxing issues and issuance of bonds.

ARGUMENTS FOR

Would prevent a minority of Oregonians from passing laws and raising taxes that the majority would then have to abide by. Will effectively safeguard against small groups of voters levying taxes on the entire state.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST

Would make it almost impossible to raise revenue for schools and other state and local government needs. Someone who does not vote would unfairly cancel out someone who took the time to cast a "yes" vote.

SOURCES: The National Coalition for Public Lands and Natural Resources, Oregon State Public Interest Research Group, Americans for the Environment, Cascade Business News