

# Burke mixes party platforms

*Libertarian candidate Richard Burke says he would replace property taxes with a sales tax*

By Tricia Duryee  
Community Reporter

Oregon voters will have an additional choice when voting for the state's next governor in the upcoming May primary. Libertarian candidate Richard Burke says he is offering the best aspects from both the Republican and Democratic platforms.

"We are a mix of the best of both parties," Burke said. He said Libertarian party members are most commonly known for their "socially tolerant and compassionate capitalism."

Burke's opponents are Democratic incumbent Gov. John Kitzhaber and Republican candidate Bill Sizemore. They both announced their decision to run earlier this month.

Burke works as a computer consultant in Beaverton and is an elected member of the Sunset High School Local School Advisory Committee. He has also held a similar position at Terra Linda Elementary School and is chairman of the Mainstream Liberty Caucus.

He has pledged to concentrate his campaign on three issues.

One of his ideas will be to completely replace the property tax with a consumption or sales tax.

Burke said even though the majority of Oregonians don't support a sales tax, 60 percent of those recently polled favored a sales tax over a property tax.

His second goal was to address the separation of school and state by introducing the concept of charter schools. He said that taking the politics out of public schools would eliminate conflicts of interest.

"The money would fall into the school of [the parent's] choice," he said. "That will remove conflict by letting the parents control where their child attends school."

Burke asked, "Who should direct the education of the child? The parents."

The final issue that Burke is choosing to focus on is crime. He said he believes the reason society has so many problems is because the emphasis is pointed in the wrong direction. He said he would like to see more reactionary measures instead of preventative actions.

One example he noted would be to divert the attention from people doing drugs to the people who commit crimes on drugs.

"The jails are full of people who aren't violent," he said.

Burke is also in favor of distributing drugs through a pharmacy. "I am in favor of legalizing drugs, but not in favor of anarchy. There would be a lot of laws to protect us from irresponsible behavior ... when drugs are used badly."

At a special nominating convention in Clackamas on Feb. 8, Burke was nominated to run for governor as the Libertarian candidate. Although Burke said he believes he is a long shot, he said there is still a possibility that he will be elected.

"People have perceptions of every party. People have told me that they don't vote for the party, but they vote for the guy or woman," he said. "I hope they mean it."

Burke also mentioned that people from the Libertarian party and other independent parties have been elected to positions in other states, including Maine, Rhode Island, Minnesota and Alaska.

"It has happened," he said. "I am going to run the best race I can."

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# Sizemore aims for fewer state taxes

*Republican candidate Bill Sizemore made headlines for writing Measures 5 and 47*

By David Ryan  
Freelance reporter

The Oregonian called him "the Republican tax-revolt leader." ASUO President Bill Miner calls him "evil."

The University Republicans say he is "a devoted husband and father of five."

These are all opinions about Bill Sizemore, the front-running Republican candidate for governor and executive director of Oregon Taxpayers United, a conservative political action committee.

Sizemore announced his plans to run for Oregon governor on Feb. 10.

Sizemore is most known for writing Measures 5 and 47, which cut property taxes and "thoroughly overhauled the [Oregon] property tax system," according to Oregon Tax Reports, an accounting journal that covers changes in Oregon's tax laws. The attention Sizemore has received from the property tax overhaul gives him the best name recognition of the Republican candidates entered so far.

However, this attention also gives Sizemore a controversial reputation with supporters of government programs such as higher education.

"I personally would not want to be in an institution of higher education if [Sizemore] were governor," said Miner. "He's not a friend of higher education. I think he's shown that with Measures 5 and 47. ... Oregonians want more prisons, they want higher education, they want smaller class sizes, and to do that they need money. [But] money

just doesn't grow on trees."

Sari Wisch, co-chair of the College Democrats, agreed. "With Sizemore's Measure 47, the cutback in property taxes caused the University to lose much-needed funding. [Sizemore] is set on causing much-needed services to be eliminated from the city of Eugene and the state of Oregon."

However, Sizemore's involvement with Oregon Taxpayers United and his authorship of Measures 5 and 47 are viewed positively by members of his own party.

"[Because] Sizemore is currently the executive director of Oregon Taxpayers United and was the author of Measure 47 ... we feel that if elected, he will work for Oregonians to keep more of their income, at the same time putting more money back into Oregon," said Jason Gathercole, vice president of the College Republicans. "Sizemore is a devoted father of five. He genuinely cares about Oregon and its future, and we feel that he makes an excellent candidate for Oregon's governorship."

"We can decide which of these two directions we want to go: bigger government with higher taxes or limited government with limited taxes," Sizemore said in his announcement to run for governor.

"I'm going to vote for him," said Roy Fenn, a graduate student in international studies. "I think government is too large and needs to be scaled down."

Critics cite the fact that while business' property taxes dropped significantly as a result of Measure 5, individual property taxes went up and state government agencies began to have budget problems.

"Today, Oregon businesses pay 64 cents in corporate income

and business property taxes for every \$1 raised from personal income and residential property taxpayers," said Russell Sadler, host of "Russell Sadler's Civic Affairs" on public radio station KSOR.

Oregon Taxpayers United defends Sizemore's record on tax cuts by implying that the budget crisis in Oregon is caused by wasteful government spending. On its Web site, Oregon Taxpayers United has published a list of Oregon's total education expenditures from 1989 to 1996. The numbers show that total expenditures have risen almost constantly since then.

The same statistics published by the Oregon Department of Education show that total expenditures for Oregon's schools have risen an average of 17.5 percent more than the Oregon Taxpayers United's statistics show for the 1993-94 and 1994-95 school years.

Oregon Taxpayers United points to school boards as the source of education's woes.

"Employee costs are 80 percent of most schools' budgets," wrote school board member Joe Driggers of Canby on Oregon Taxpayers United's Web site. "School boards, knowing that revenues per student had become relatively fixed, have refused to curtail employee costs. We had the ability to control our expenses, and chose instead to give our employees raises."

In his announcement to run for governor, Sizemore noted that editorial writers had described a contest between his philosophy of limited government and Gov. John Kitzhaber's support of government programs as "good therapy" for Oregon.

"Well," Sizemore said, "let the therapy begin."

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