

MEASURE 30

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the Lane Council of Governments.

The Oregon Department of Education estimates school districts statewide would have to bear the loss by laying off approximately 8,000 teachers and other licensed staff members, enlarging class sizes by four or five students and chopping off 27 days from the academic year.

At the University level, Vice President and Provost John Moseley said the University would stand to lose between \$1.7 and \$2.5 million in the wake of Measure 30's failure. He added that the state funding loss would be just the latest in a series of cuts, and the University would no longer be able to continue providing the same level of service using less and less money. If Measure 30 fails, course offerings will be cut back, he said.

"With all the budget cuts so far, we have protected academic programs and courses," Moseley said. "We are unable to do this if there are further cuts, unless we can replace those cuts with new

revenues. We will likely be looking at some combination of course reductions and tuition increases."

Currently it costs \$10,274 to be a full-time student, according to a report released by LCOG. Student tuition pays for 64 percent of that figure, while state appropriations cover 36 percent of it. In 1999-2001 this amount was split evenly, with the student share growing to 54 percent in 2001-03.

Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski, in a visit to the University last week, said the state's shrinking contribution to higher education is a growing problem.

"One of the things Oregon has not done well in the last 10 or 15 years is have an investment policy in post-secondary education," he said, which is why he supports Measure 30.

Ballot Measure 30 enacts several temporary and permanent tax increases and changes to ensure that public services, such as education, law enforcement and various social services, maintain the minimum funding they need to provide quality service to the public.

If approved, Measure 30 will raise approximately \$1.25 billion during the 2003-05 biennium, with around \$800 million coming from a temporary surcharge on income taxes. The surcharge is a graduated income tax assessment, which means the more

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money a person makes, the more he or she must pay. Middle-income taxpayers would pay an extra \$3.17 a month in taxes if the ballot measure passes, while taxpayers who make more than \$200,000 a year would pay an extra \$194.33 per month. Measure 30 would also enact other tax law changes and an increase in

business taxes.

According to a report prepared by LCOG, if the tax plan is defeated, K-12 schools will be hit the hardest with a \$414 million loss in funding. Public schools would lose \$544 per student this school year and \$586 per student in the 2004-05 school year.

In the LCOG report, all school districts in the county were asked to respond to a survey on how Measure 30 would affect them, and the Springfield School District estimated a \$7.5 million loss of funding if Measure 30 is rejected.

Also in the report, one Pleasant Hill School District official responded to the survey by saying that some opponents of Measure 30 wrongly believe schools can offset state funding losses by making their budgets more efficient.

"That argument is coming from the same misinformed, mean-spirited individuals who proclaim that we do not have a funding problem in public education, but a spending problem," stated the official.

The Eugene School District indicated it would face a \$12.24 million

budget shortfall if the ballot measure fails. The survey quoted a district official as saying that they would consider cutting school days, staff positions and programs to get out of the red.

"Teachers are already having difficulty meeting the needs of students who need extra help," the district official said. "Some middle and high school classes in core subjects have 40 to 50 students."

Even though the ballot measure's success will save educational institutions from taking drastic measures like cutting school days and increasing class sizes, Moseley said the revenue package is not a final solution to the University's financial difficulties.

"We have already cut to the bone and are still looking at a \$2 million deficit next year," Moseley said. "It is imperative that there be some reinvestment in higher education in the next biennium, or tuition will continue to increase substantially."

Contact the news editor at jenniferbear@dailyemerald.com.

TAXES

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"So many students just don't know what they're voting about, and then they just don't vote," the student advisory group's Co-President Alie Sewell said.

Measure 30 would prevent \$544.6 million in cuts to education, public safety and social services, according to the Oregon Legislature.

The panel — consisting of a Democratic state senator, a local school board member, a Republican Party representative, the director of a conservative lobbying group and a former Democratic state representative — spent nearly two hours agreeing that Oregon was in crisis, but differing widely in how they thought the

problem should be fixed.

The right-leaning panelists called for lower taxes and a better business environment, while the left called for support of social services. All agreed, however, that in the words of moderator Jackman Wilson, tax reform is "one of the most important public policy issues that has faced Oregonians in a long time."

State Sen. Floyd Prozanski, D-Eugene, said a committee of legislators is meeting to look at ways of overhauling Oregon's tax system, but critics on both sides questioned whether the group will come up with any meaningful reform.

"The reality is, we as a state have to figure out what we want and how we're going to pay for it," Prozanski said.

For now, the only funding option Oregon voters have before them is Measure 30.

Russ Walker, director of Oregon Citizens for a Sound Economy, has led the charge against the ballot measure. The state needs to be more efficient in its spending, not raise taxes, he said.

"Anybody who says taxes don't matter does not spend any time with businesses and business leaders," he said.

Bringing additional taxes to a state with a high unemployment rate and low rate of job creation only further discourages businesses from coming to Oregon, Walker said.

"You have to leave the state of Oregon to get a job in many cases," he told the nearly 30 students in attendance.

Prozanski responded to Walker's portrait of Oregon's business climate by citing Oregon's Office of Economic Analysis, which estimates that Oregon's economy will improve in the coming months.

He later added that if Measure 30 does not pass, the Department of Higher Education will lose \$7.5 million, and he estimated that universities would make up that shortfall by raising tuition once again.

Former state representative Kitty Piercy focused her comments on the community's social welfare.

She said that as a member of the Lane County Commission on Children and Families, she regularly sees the negative impact that a loss of funding has on social services and community members.

Piercy said University students are included in that tax payer bracket and should think about the impact that their vote on Measure 30 will have.

"I'd like each of you to leave here with some concern for your community," she said.

While opposing panelists disagreed on the path they wanted to take to solve Oregon's tax crisis, they agreed that the state did need to address the issue.

"There isn't good or evil here," said panelist and 4-J school board member Tom Herrmann. "I think the debate about Measure 30 ... is really a debate about what we want Oregon to be."

Contact the city/state politics reporter at nikacarlson@dailyemerald.com.

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