

Wednesday, January 28, 2004

EDITORIAL

Upcoming Measure 30 election has high stakes

Politically-minded Oregonians have been abuzz in recent weeks over Measure 30. The embattled and wide-reaching ballot measure, which would affect income tax assessments if passed, increase some corporate taxes and reduce or cancel various tax deductions, would also avoid \$544.6 million in budget cuts.

The dollar figures, and indeed the stakes, are high and reflect that this proposition is much more than a simple tax measure.

In fact, the political and economic implications here are dramatic enough that some members of the Editorial Board could find little common ground.

Those who favor the measure argued that cuts triggered by the measure's failure would deal a serious blow to critical state services, particularly education. Those who opposed said that, like the defeated Measure 28, the proposition's supporters are overstating the potential negative impacts.

The measure's opponents also argued that the personal income tax was too progressive (those making between \$10,000 and \$20,000 would pay an additional 1 percent in income tax; those making \$90,000 or more would pay 8 or 9 percent more); its proponents said taxing the highest-income taxpayers the most would be fiscally easier for the state's residents on the whole (the average Oregonian will pay only \$24-\$36 per year, according to an argument in favor published in the voter's pamphlet).

In general, supporters of the measure argued the wide educational and health benefits of maintaining state services at their current level mandated the tax changes; its opponents said the negative effect on families and businesses could be too harsh in an already stagnating economy.

Despite political differences, the members of the Editorial Board agreed on at least a few issues. For one, education (and higher education in particular) are increasingly underfunded; long-term decreases will harm not only those in Oregon's education system over the next decade, but will negatively impact the state's competitiveness and economic health in the long-run.

Moreover, the members of the Editorial Board agreed it would be in most students' short-term interest to vote yes on the measure. Most students make under \$20,000 per year, and so would pay at most 1 percent more taxes: just dollars, not hundreds of dollars. Measure 30's success would probably stave off tuition hikes (or at least keep those hikes small) and keep some classes from being cut, for the time being.

No matter how you feel about Measure 30, the issues at stake are too important not to vote.

The voting deadline for the special election is Feb. 3.

EDITORIAL POLICY

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses can be sent to letters @dailyemerald.com. Letters to the editor and guest commentaries are encouraged. Letters are limited to 250 words and guest commentaries to 550 words. Authors are limited to one submission per calendar month. Submission must include phone number and address for verification. The Emerald reserves the right to edit for space, grammar and style.

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Logging for love

When I was small, my parents bought 126 acres of timberland, much of it old and first-growth, in southern Oregon. They also bought a log truck, a small sawmill, enough seeds to begin a well-stocked garden, eight chickens and a rooster.

The first year, the focus was on clearing enough land for a home, a home that my dad built by hand from trees cut and milled on our property. In our old family albums, there are pictures of Dad standing in the snow with a hammer putting together the frame of our house. I'm beside him holding the nails.

For the majority of that year, we didn't have electricity or indoor plumbing. Our water came straight from the creek, and Mom hung an old railroad lantern from an exposed beam in the half-completed kitchen for light.

The next year, with the house nearly finished, my parents began selectively logging the land they had bought. We would all venture out together to find the perfect tree to cut into specialty pieces of lumber for sale. Once that tree was found, Mom and Dad would go back alone to figure out how to bring it down and back to the mill. It was hard, dangerous work, and it was beautiful.

A few years later, facing mounting debt

and a poor school system, my parents sold the land to a family who pledged never to log it. Then, they put my brother and me in the back of the Isuzu Trooper they had recently traded in the old Vanagon for, and headed for five-day-a-week workweeks and an education system they felt confident in. It was a trade-off that to this day



Aimee Rudin
 Five-feet of fury

they say was for the best, but I'm not sure either of them really believes that. They loved that land like it was a child. It was part of their psyche and an integral part of how they defined themselves as humans.

Every day, as new anti-environmental legislation is passed through Congress, the battle between loggers and environmentalists continues. But in this war, both sides are losing, and perhaps only the

government is winning.

When a timber sale is made on federal or state land, the money from the sale goes not to families, individual logging outfits or even private companies. It goes to the government, often to finance further stages of "healthy forest management."

Last spring, I had the chance to spend some time at a tree-sit and also to spend a day with a local logging outfit as they cleared a hillside owned by a private corporation. Both groups were adamant that what they were doing was right, and both groups seemed to truly love the forest they were standing in.

As I spoke with the logging foreman about his crew, his family and his upbringing, I was struck with his compassion and knowledge not only of the land he stood on, but also of the forest policy being dictated in Washington, D.C. It's very easy to say that loggers are anti-environmental, and probably some are, but many have spent their lives in the forest and they love it just as deeply as any activist. Just like me, they grew up there.

Contact the columnist at aimeerudin@dailyemerald.com. Her opinions do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

Measure 30 failure threatens education

On page 4 of the Voters' Pamphlet for the Feb. 3 special election is a brief description of Measure 30 and a statement of the results of a "Yes" or "No" vote. According to this description, a "No" vote on Measure 30 would "trigger \$544.6 million in budget cuts to areas including education, health care, senior services

GUEST COMMENTARY

and public safety." A "No" vote on Measure 30 would overturn a bipartisan agreement, arrived at by all 25 of our Democratic and 11 of our Republican representatives. This agreement was designed to address the State of Oregon's budget problems. Citizens for a Sound Economy, a Washington, D.C., lobby

group, and a few large Oregon businesses seek to overturn the hard work of our elected representatives in arriving at this agreement.

Please take the time to read the arguments in favor of Measure 30 starting on page 14 of the Voters' Pamphlet as well as those arguments against Measure 30 starting on page 34 very carefully, and please note who has paid for the printing of each argument.

I am a senior, a retired economics instructor, and I represent Springfield on the Lane Community College Board, which passed a resolution supporting Measure 30. Therefore, Measure 30 is an important issue for me as it should be for all Oregon voters. After reading all the arguments in the Voters' Pamphlet, it is my opinion that a "No" vote on Measure 30 would constitute a

major threat to Oregon's education system, including higher education and community colleges as well as K-12. I also see a "No" vote on Measure 30 as presenting a threat to senior services and health care as well as public safety, all of which are important to citizens of Oregon such as me.

Therefore, I intend to vote "Yes" on Measure 30 and urge all other Oregonian voters to do the same. Remember that taxes are the price we pay for our civilization and the high quality of life we enjoy in Oregon. Also remember that this tax is progressive, so the major burden will be on the rich, and it will only last for a maximum of three years.

Dennis Shine sits on the Lane Community College Board of Directors.