

Opinion / Politics

— EDITORIAL —

No on 97

On the ballot this fall, voters will see Measure 97 (formerly IP 28), which would raise over \$6.1 billion every biennium from what is essentially an end-run around a traditional sales tax on products and even services. Voters have put the kibosh on a traditional sales tax, so now they need to be aware of this—a new tactic.

The measure would impose a 2.5 percent tax on gross receipts of companies...

This translates as a sales tax that spans items that are even exempt from sales taxes in other states.

Oregon's income tax doesn't go away to balance out this burden on households, either.

The projected impact to the average household (low- and medium-income families included) is \$600 in additional taxation per year.

Companies such as JC Penney, which operates at a loss in Oregon, say they will either have to raise its prices or make the tough choice to

close more stores in the state.

Grocery prices are anticipated to spike 2.5-4% virtually overnight as stores compensate for the tax they pay on wholesale goods, the tax they must pass along to consumers, and the efforts needed to track and pay the tax to the state.

Where does the \$6.1 billion go? Into Oregon's General Fund, which means it can be spent on basically anything that gets pushed through Salem. The politicians we all love to hate will have what amounts to a blank check.

Opponents of 97 estimate that by the time the impact of this new tax is fully felt by small businesses, 38,000 jobs will fade away within our state. We don't know how this was calculated or if the number is accurate, but economic common sense dictates that at least some job loss will occur.

It's mind-boggling why a burden would be placed on companies and households in our already struggling economy simply to fund future unchecked political spending whims.

—The Baker County Press Editorial Board

— GUEST OPINION —

Mexico should pay for the wall

By Donald Trump

The provision of the Patriot Act, Section 326 - the "know your customer" provision, compelling financial institutions to demand identity documents before opening accounts or conducting financial transactions is a fundamental element of the outline below. That section authorized the executive branch to issue detailed regulations on the subject, found at 31 CFR 130.120-121. It's an easy decision for Mexico: make a one-time payment of \$5-10 billion to ensure that \$24 billion continues to flow into their country year after year.

There are several ways to compel Mexico to pay for the wall including the following:

On day 1 promulgate a "proposed rule" (regulation) amending 31 CFR 130.121 to redefine applicable financial institutions to include money transfer companies like Western Union, and redefine "account" to include wire transfers. Also include in the proposed rule a requirement that no alien may wire money outside of the United States unless the alien first provides a document establishing his lawful presence in the United States.

On day 2 Mexico will immediately protest. They receive approximately \$24 billion a year in remittances from Mexican nationals working in the United States. The majority of that amount comes from illegal aliens. It serves as de facto welfare for poor families in Mexico. There is no significant social safety net provided by the state in Mexico.

On day 3 tell Mexico that if the Mexican government will contribute the funds needed to the United States to pay for the wall, the Trump Administration will not promulgate the final rule, and the regulation will not go into effect.

Trade tariffs, or enforcement of existing trade rules: There is no doubt that Mexico is engaging in unfair subsidy behavior that has eliminated thousands of U.S. jobs, and which we are obligated to respond to; the impact of any tariffs on the price imports will be more than offset by the economic and income gains of increased production in the United States, in addition to revenue from any tariffs themselves. Mexico needs access to our markets much more than the reverse, so we have all the leverage and will win the negotiation.

By definition, if you have a large trade deficit with a nation, it means



Submitted Photo

Donald Trump in the GOP nominee for President of the United States.

they are selling far more to you than the reverse - thus they, not you, stand to lose from enforcing trade rules through tariffs (as has been done to save many U.S. industries in the past).

Cancelling visas: Immigration is a privilege, not a right. Mexico is totally dependent on the United States as a release valve for its own poverty - our approvals of hundreds of thousands of visas to their nationals every year is one of our greatest leverage points.

We also have leverage through business and tourist visas for important people in the Mexican economy. Keep in mind, the United States has already taken in 4X more migrants than any other country on planet earth, producing lower wages and higher unemployment for our own citizens and recent migrants.

Visa fees: Even a small increase in visa fees would pay for the wall. This includes fees on border crossing cards, of which more than one million are issued a year.

The border-crossing card is also one of the greatest sources of illegal immigration into the United States, via overstays. Mexico is also the single largest recipient of U.S. green cards, which confer a path to U.S. citizenship.

Again, we have the leverage so Mexico will back down. Conclusion: Mexico has taken advantage of us in another way as well: gangs, drug traffickers and cartels have freely exploited our open borders and committed vast numbers of crimes inside the United States.

The United States has borne the extraordinary daily cost of this criminal activity, including the cost of trials and incarcerations. Not to mention the even greater human cost.

We have the moral high ground here, and all the leverage.

It is time we use it in order to make America great again.

— LETTERS TO THE EDITOR —

Gun Comment Profoundly Stupid

To the Editor:

On one of the gun control debate sites I saw a comment by a Portland woman. She commented that it was funny that she lived 66 years and never felt the need of a gun. I guess that was meant to be profound. Actually it reflects the state of American education. Let's go back to school. Lady, you don't kiss any royal arse, as the Brits say. Twenty-five thousand men died in a seven-year war to found your republic, where the common man rules. The idea of divine rights of kings died when we won at York Town. You don't Siege Heil, or bow to the Rising Sun. You don't have to wear a Burqa or worry about midnight police raids like in Stalinist Russia or Mao's police state. You most likely are upper middle class in a safe neighborhood patrolled by some men and women in blue. All of these people have firearms and provide you with the

safe life you live.

The founders came from an era where absolute monarchs ruled and state religions were the norm. You couldn't peacefully assemble, worship as you pleased, publicly speak your mind without retribution or be secure in your home if the state wanted to search. Torture was used to get confessions.

The Founders knew that it is human nature to seek, gain and consolidate power. A "profound" statement like, it doesn't take thirty rounds to hunt deer, is just another imbecilic statement. They weren't concerned about deer becoming dictators. Established power with military and police were their concerns. They added the Second Amendment to the bill of rights to secure the rest of your American rights. Take advantage of your First Amendment rights and learn something. Your comment wasn't profound; it was profoundly stupid.

Steve Culley
Baker City

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Bentz appointed chair of Columbia River Council

Representative Cliff Bentz (R-Ontario) participated in the yearly meeting of the Legislative Council on River Governance ("Council") on Aug. 22-23, 2016, in Boise, Idaho.

The Council is made up of a minimum of four Legislators, appointed by the Speakers and Presidents of the Houses and Senates, from each of the states of Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington. The Council meets once per year to review, discuss, debate, and on occasion act upon, federal and state laws affecting water rights, water interests and water supply within the Columbia River Basin.

Each year a chairman for the group is selected from the state delegation and is given the opportunity to organize and plan the next year's conference.

Oregon will host the Council meeting in 2017.

Rep. Bentz was selected as Chair of the Council for

2016-2017 and, with the help and experienced assistance of the Water Team from the Council of State Governments, will lead the 2017 meeting.

Rep. Bentz said, "I have been privileged to serve on the Council, as one of Oregon's voting members, since my appointment, by Speaker Hunt, to the Council in 2009.

"The Council provides a forum and opportunity to exchange ideas and discuss protection of water use with others interested in the future of Columbia Basin water supply, access and management.

"It also provides attendees with an update on actions and laws, both federal and state, affecting the Columbia Basin and Oregon's place, related to water, in the Basin. In this age of hotter weather, longer dry summers, and drought, such information is invaluable."

Among the many issues



Submitted photo.

Rep. Cliff Bentz.

discussed at this year's meeting were updates on Columbia River Treaty negotiations, water markets, power generation, water use efficiency, and aquatic invasive species prevention & mitigation.

For more information on the LCRG, visit: <http://www.csgwest.org/programs/LEGISLATIVE-COUNCILONRIVER-GOVERNANCE.aspx>

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