

Happy Labor Day! ...Ballot measures attack unions

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corrections members are concerned that Measure 61 would lead to prison overcrowding, which puts corrections personnel in greater danger. Plus, Botkin said, many property crimes are motivated by addiction. "Our members understand that without drug and alcohol treatment, it's a revolving door." AFSCME and other unions are supporting Measure 57 — an alternative referred by the Oregon Legislature — which toughens some sentences but also requires alcohol and drug treatment.

MEASURE 62: Constitutional amendment to allocate 15 percent of lottery proceeds to a public safety fund for crime prevention, investigation, prosecution. In accord with previous ballot measures approved by voters, lottery funds — currently about \$700 million a year — go to economic development, education, and parks and natural resources. If this passes, about \$100 million a year would be taken

away from K-12 education and economic development and given to the state crime lab, early childhood programs, district attorneys, and county sheriffs, according to a formula written by Mannix. Education advocates oppose the shift, and so does AFSCME; Botkin notes that the money goes for investigation and prosecution, but not for incarceration, "the ultimate public safety program."

MEASURE 63: Exempts residential and farm property owners from requirements to obtain building, plumbing, electrical or mechanical permits or inspections for improvements valued at under \$35,000 in any calendar year. "This is a poorly-written initiative that undermines the whole reason we have building codes and permit processes," says Chris West of Pac/West Communications. Pac/West, a lobby firm employed by some building trades unions, is forming a coalition to oppose the measure — Citizens Against Unsafe Housing. The group is backed

by building trades unions, home builders and remodelers, realtors, insurance companies, public employees, and firefighters. Permits and inspections are about making sure homes are safe, West said, and making sure that they last. Eliminating permit and inspection requirements could undermine industry wages and standards, and open up a world of opportunity for shoddy, unlicensed and unscrupulous contractors. If a project overlapped a calendar year, West points out, projects could be valued at up to \$70,000 without any permit. "This is an attack on those who have been trained and licensed to provide quality homes for Oregonians," West said, "but it's also an attack on the wellbeing of owners, who won't know they're at risk from unpermitted, uninspected work." Home inspectors employed by home buyers won't know if work done behind sheet rock was to code, for example. And uninspected work would increase risks for insurers. AFSCME's Botkin says the local building inspectors her union represents are also opposed to the measure, out of concern for public safety. "Building permits are there for a reason," Botkin said, "to make sure it's built right so your family and friends and people you sell it to are not at risk."

MEASURE 64: Penalizes person, entity for using funds collected with public resource for political purpose. This measure, sponsored by Bill Sizemore, is about making it harder for public employee unions to collect voluntary political contributions from members who have authorized them. This is now done via electronic payroll deductions, but the measure would ban that, so that union members would have to find a way to contribute on their own. "This measure targets Oregonians who are working in public sector — teachers, nurses, and firefighters — and takes away their rights," said OEA spokesperson Uherbelau. Adds AFSCME's Botkin: "This would really neuter the ability of our members to participate in the political process."

The voter registration deadline for the November general election is Oct. 14. Ballots will be mailed out Oct. 17 and are due back Nov. 4.



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