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...Measure 97 backers take their campaign to the Legislature

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majority support for the measure, but a \$23 million ad campaign by big business opponents turned that around, and Measure 97 lost 59 to 40 percent. Supporters are choosing to interpret the result as voters rejecting that specific proposal, not voters rejecting the idea that big corporations should pay more in order for Oregon to improve funding for schools, health care and senior services.

"The hundreds of thousands of conversations we had with voters at the door showed that nobody wants us to be lowest in the nation for corporate taxes," said Andrea Paluso, executive director of Family Forward Oregon. "The problem around corporations not paying their fair share still remains, and we're going to keep working until we find a solution."

Now the state is heading into another one of its perennial budget crises, with Legislative Revenue Office forecasting a \$1.4 billion shortfall in the next biennium.

"We refuse to accept service cuts when Oregon has the lowest corporate tax rate in the nation," said OEA President Hanna Vaandering. According to a May 2016 study by Anderson Economic Group, Oregon has the lowest effective business tax rate of any state in the nation

"They have an unconscionably low tax rate. That's one of the reasons we're going to be pushing tax transparency for corporations."



— Brian Rudiger, SEIU Local 503 executive director

— 6.6 percent.

"They have an unconscionably low tax rate," said SEIU Local 503 Executive Director Brian Rudiger. That's one of the reasons we're going to be pushing tax transparency for corporations."

Rudiger said the coalition will be coming up with a set of revenue proposals in the next few weeks for the Legislature to consider.

The Oregon Constitution requires a three-fifths supermajority for the Oregon Legislature to pass new revenue-raising bills, thanks to a ballot measure referred to voters in 1996 by a Republican-led Legislature. Democrats are one vote short of the supermajority in both the House and Senate. But lawmakers could refer tax measures to voters with a simple majority, and they may also be able to repeal or reduce tax breaks with a simple majority under a recent court decision. Oregon has over \$1.8 billion a year in personal and corporate income tax breaks, not counting deductions and exclusions that come from alignment with the federal tax code.

Ironically, business groups that campaigned against Measure 97 by saying it was a sales tax (actually, it was a corporate income tax) have themselves proposed a sales tax as the best solution to Oregon's perennial budget troubles. But leaders of A Better Oregon said they're not in favor of that.

"We don't want to push forward a revenue solution that happens on the backs of working people and small businesses," Paluso said. "We believe the focus should remain on the largest corporations doing business in our state."

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