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Measure 28 will likely cost tax payers one way or other

By Medford Mail Tribune

Despite the likely failure of Measure 28 in January, Oregon legislators say that there is little that can be done to pull the plug on a special election that will cost the cash-strapped state \$1.5 mil-

Senate Minority Leader Kate Brown (D-Portland) said that the Legislature doesn't have the political will to take the income tax measure off the ballot, even though recent polls have shown voters would defeat it. Measure 28 would increase taxes temporarily to help offset a state budget shortfall, raising \$312 million in the current budget and \$412 million in the 2002-04 biennium budget.

If the measure fails, the state will have to cut \$450 million to schools, human services and public safety in the current budget.

"It may be an exercise in futility, but there is not the support in the new Legislature to take it off the ballot," she said. "There is a group of legislators who want to keep it on the ballot and then do an 'I told you so.' "

These legislators, in Republican and Democratic camps, want to set an example by showing the fruitlessness of trying to raise taxes during a recession, she said. Measure 28's defeat would reveal to voters how grave the budget cutbacks will be, she said.

"When 130 Oregon State Police officers are laid off and two weeks of school are shortened, it will become readily apparent to people," she said.

Sen. Lenn Hannon said that the Jan. 28 election will be a total waste of money. "It's going to go down by a pretty substantial margin," he predicted.

The Ashland Republican said he would like to take it off the ballot, but that he doesn't think that idea would get enough legislative support.

"We have a lot of weakkneed sissies up here who don't have the courage to remove it," he said. "Why continue to jab the voters in the eye with a stick?"

Rep. Alan Bates said that he would support withdrawing the measure from the ballot if he were certain that voters would reject it.

"I think its chances of

Check Out

firesense.

tyclicks.com.

eating tips.

pages.com.

com.

gonscientific.com.

These Web Sites:

Fire Sense: A Smart Way to Prevent, Detect and Escape Home Fires at www.thehartford.com/

Zinsser at www.zinsser.com.

"Safety Clicks!" at www.safe

Oregon Scientific at www.ore

By visiting www.pomwonder ful.com, you can find pomegranate decorating ideas, recipes and

Yellow pages at www.yellow

National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education at www.special-ed-careers.net. Energizer at www.energizer.

Wahl Warm Lotion Massager at

Film Movement at www.the

Ford at www.ford.com.

www.wahl.com.

filmmovement.com.

passing are low, if not zero," said the Ashland Democrat.

Bates said he will await the results of an Oregon Education Association poll before he would consider canceling the election.

"If we do that and there is no chance of its passage, then there is no purpose in running an election," he said. However, naysayers have been wrong in the past, he cautioned.

Other legislators predicted Measure 19, which shifted state funds to give education more money, also wouldn't pass in September, but 61 percent of voters approved it, he said. He is hesitant to withdraw the measure from the ballot because of the financial impact to Oregon's schools, health services and public safety.

Despite some voter apathy after a litany of budget cuts, Bates said, "It's amazing that you can cut a budget 20 percent and not see horrific changes. For the average voter, it's not right in your face."

Rep. Rob Patridge blamed the Democrats and outgoing Gov. John Kitzhaber for forcing Measure 28 onto the voters during a series of special sessions that looked for ways to plug the state's shortfall. While Patridge doesn't think Measure 28 is likely to pass, he said there may be legal and constitutional problems in dropping it from the ballot at this point.

As to the cost of the election, Patridge said, "\$1.5 million is a drop in the bucket. That's a minor issue. The major issue is we need government accountability. We need to win back some confidence in the government."

The Medford Republican doesn't believe the new Legislature will find some magical way of dealing with the budget dilemma Measure 28's defeat will wreak on Oregon schools and other agencies.

"I think there's a pretty deep hole," he said. "I think the low-hanging fruit has been picked."

In the meantime, it will be another problem for the new Legislature and new governor to deal with, said Patridge.

"It puts a lodestone around Ted Kulongoski's neck," he said.

Advance with it.





hot drinks and other refreshments were served at the event.

The world is advancing.



CROSSROADS OPEN HOUSE - Tristan Fiske, 3, (Top Photo) in wiener dog costume enjoyed a cooked wiener dog at Crossroads Animal Hospital Open House on Saturday, Dec. 7 celebrating 'Skidmarks" (with Santa Claus) 5th birthday. Photographer Andy Mechling/Timeless Photography was available to take photos of guests pets with Santa. Hot dogs, (Photos by Kathy Young)

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

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Never underestimate the capacity of another human being to have exactly the same shortcomings you have. - Leigh Steinberg -



SUNDAY MORNING											R 15, 2002
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