

Street Roots recommendations on the 2018 ballot measures for the Portland metro area and Oregon

# ENDORSEMENTS

### MEASURE 103

Amends Constitution: Prohibits taxes/fees based on transactions for "groceries" (defined) enacted or amended after September 2017



Don't be fooled by this measure's title. It's been carefully styled to make the voter think this is about their groceries, when in fact this measure is intended

to change our state constitution and exempt corporations from local and state taxes.

No one is trying to tax your groceries. There have been several past efforts to alter and increase taxes paid by corporations - including the out-of-state mega-grocers pushing this measure - and state and local governments should have that right and obligation. To call that a tax on groceries is a deception. And under that deception is this effort to exempt grocery companies, restaurants and distributors from a whole slate of taxes. The monied interests behind this measure know they can't get their tax protection passed in perpetuity without consumers thinking it's in their best interest. It is not.

This is a vote about whether a specific, global industry deserves a constitutional exemption from Oregonians on taxes that support our health care, education, environment and social services. And because this is a vote to change our constitution, it is highly unlikely it will be modified in the future. As the residents of Oregon, we mustn't sign away our state constitutional rights to out-of-state corporations.

Vote no on this measure.

### MEASURE 104

Amends Constitution: Expands (beyond taxes) application of requirement that three-fifths legislative majority approve bills raising revenue



In terms of signing away our constitutional rights, this is a whopper. Currently, it takes a three-fifths majority in both houses of the state legislature to impose new taxes. This measure

would take that three-fifths model and apply it to any action by our elected representatives that "raises revenue," which includes changes to fees, corporate tax breaks, and sundry tax credits and deductions. According to the Oregon Center for Public Policy, there are more than 350 such tax breaks embedded in our state code that provide billions of dollars in subsidies to a range of groups and corporations, from the mega-dairies to vacation home buyers. The recipients like the status quo.

Like Measure 103, this proposal - pushed for by the Realtors Association - would rewrite our state constitution to essentially tie our hands on revenue. By instituting a nearly unsurmountable three-fifths vote for passage, the proponents of this measure could prevent incentives to curb climate change through a cap-and-invest program, to name just one example. It would also ensure that our state mortgage tax subsidy remains skewed toward homeowners in the highest income brackets, even for second home.

There are 30 Oregon senators in the chamber. It would only take 13 to run the show. That's not the direction our democracy should go. Our representatives have the obligation and responsibility to fund the needs of Oregonians, but Measure 104 would help ensure that those needs would go unmet.

Vote no on this terrible measure.

### MEASURE 105

Repeals law limiting use of state/local law enforcement resources to enforce federal immigration laws



Contrary to the incendiary language of this measure's supporters, Oregon's sanctuary law does not prohibit police from doing their job. It does not stop them from

arrested and detaining criminal suspects, including immigrants. It does, however, keep local law enforcement officers from being forced to act beyond their local mandate and spend local resources for federal immigration policy, any more than they do for tax laws, for example.

Measure 105 has been propped up with funding from the Federation for Immigration Reform, or FAIR, a national organization the Southern Poverty Law Center has designated a hate group. Supporters of this measure, including its chief proponent, Oregonians for Immigration Reform, employ hateful and xenophobic rhetoric, stoking fear of the "other" and clinging to tenuous anecdotes while ignoring the facts.

Keeping the state's sanctuary status does not mean Oregon will become a magnet for undocumented immigrants. The federal government has been busy enforcing immigration laws within our state, arresting and deporting undocumented immigrants, and they will continue to do so with out the repeal of this law.

Keeping the state's sanctuary status does not prevent local law enforcement from arresting criminals and keeping our communities safe - it ensures that local agencies use their resources to focus on local public safety priorities. That's why Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington county sheriffs have all come out against this measure. They know that if Oregon's sanctuary status is repealed, undocumented immigrants will be afraid to call the police when they witness or are a victim of a crime, which would serve to erode public safety.

Keeping Oregon's sanctuary status intact keeps all Oregonians safer, and to repeal it would be a morally repugnant. Vote no.

### MEASURE 106

Amends Constitution to prohibit spending "public funds" (defined) directly/indirectly for "abortion" (defined); exceptions; reduces abortion access



While proponents of this measure have tried to disguise it as a proposal that would give Oregonians the "freedom from having to pay for

other people's personal choices" by stopping tax dollars from funding "elective and late-term abortions," make no mistake: This measure is aimed at chipping away at women's reproductive rights in Oregon, and it won't be the last.

Backers of this measure have simply taken aim at the lowest hanging fruit - some of the most vulnerable women in Oregon whose health care is funded through Medicaid (Oregon Health Plan) and women with state-funded health plans.

If the goal is to prevent tax dollars from supporting people's "personal choices," limiting access to abortion would have the opposite effect.

Unwanted pregnancies carried to term would cost \$19.3 million more than the estimated \$2.9 million cost of abortion procedures women on Oregon Health Plan would have each year, according to the state's analysis of Measure 106's fiscal impact.

This does not include the cost to taxpayers that would be incurred as the child grows. The child would likely be on the Oregon Health Plan, like his or her mother, and their family may need state assistance to pay for food and rent. The child could also end up in foster care, and would very likely attend public school.

Additionally, the claim that taxpayers should be shielded from funding late-term abortions is absurd. Late-term abortions arise from difficult decisions made between a pregnant woman and her doctor when there is a serious risk, either to her or the fetus - any other scenario anti-abortion advocates propagate as commonplace is pure fiction.

As women in states across the country face increasingly limited access to reproductive health care and a new Supreme Court contingency threatens Roe v. Wade, it's crucial Oregon stay its course and continue to unapologetically preserve women's full constitutional rights. Vote no.

### MEASURE 26-201

Imposes surcharge on certain retailers with more than \$1 billion in revenue; funds clean, renewable energy projects and job training.



Climate change and economic inequality are pressing challenges, and measure 26-201 addresses both. The Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund supports

renewable energy projects, and the jobs it takes to do them. A broad coalition designed this fund with equity in mind.

This is a justice issue. People in poverty are disproportionately harmed by climate change while they bear the least responsibility for exacerbating it.

The initiative derives its funding from companies that are carbon polluters. Big retailers who often have carbon-intensive supply chains would pay a 1 percent surcharge on gross revenue. This means retailers with gross revenue of \$1 billion (and at least \$500,000 in Portland), exempting grocery, medicine and healthcare sales

Then the funds are focused on low-income folks, communities of color, women and people who are disabled. By retrofitting homes and doing other energy efficiencies, these projects aim to reduce carbon emissions. They also reduce energy bills, ultimately helping low-income people stay in their homes.

The jobs component is a smart equitable design: a portion of the fund supports clean energy job training to carry out the clean energy work, marrying environmental concerns with those of labor. The jobs will in particular be available to communities of color and low-income Portlanders. In a city in which African-Americans, Native Americans and Hawaiian-Pacific Portlanders earn on average less than half that of white Portlanders, it matters that these jobs are living wage at more than \$21 an hour

We need to get our city off fossil fuels and we need to put people to work in well-paying jobs.

From funding to implementation, the Clean Energy Fund is a smart, equitable initiative.

### MEASURE 26-199

Authorizes \$652.8 million in general obligation bonds to fund affordable housing in Washington, Clackamas, and Multnomah counties. Bonds will be used to build affordable housing for low-income households; purchase, rehabilitate, and preserve affordability of existing housing; buy land for affordable housing; help prevent displacement.



Metro was creative and bold enough to put together a big housing bond - \$652.8 million over 20 years - to prioritize safe, stable housing for people across the region. This

is an important opportunity. All the housing built or purchased with this bond money must be permanently affordable. In other words, once it's built to be affordable, it has to stay that way.

Bond-funded housing supports Portlanders earning less than 80 percent the median income (about \$65,000 for a family of four), and a sizeable portion is committed to people earning below 30 percent the median income, such as the regions many senior and disabled residents trying to survive on fixed incomes that aren't keeping pace with the rising cost of housing. What's more, this bond prioritizes "family-sized" dwellings, making room for intergenerational families and supporting seniors and students.

Measure 26-199 is scaled right - regionally - both because the need for housing doesn't end at county lines, and because the taxes are spread out, too. The average homeowner will contribute \$5 per month (an estimated 24 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value) to pay down this general obligation bond.

While Metro provides the vehicle for pooling these funds and providing oversight, it doesn't build the housing. That happens through local municipalities, housing authorities or, if the statewide constitutional amendment passes (Measure 102), other affordable-housing providers too. In this way, local communities will have a chance to determine how the money is spent.

The private market cannot solve the housing crisis for the poorest of our neighbors because it will not pencil out. We have to have public solutions, and this is a solution that, paired with measure 102, will get an estimated 12,000 into permanently affordable housing.

### MEASURE 26-200

Amends Charter: Limits candidate contributions, expenditures; campaign communications identify funders.



This Portland City Charter amendment would limit campaign contributions to a candidate in a city election from an individual or political committee to \$500,

unless the contribution is from a small donor committee, and it would prohibit contributions from corporations.

It's similar to the Multnomah County measure voters passed in 2016 that was struck down by a county judge citing free speech protections.

But backers of that measure foresaw legal challenges from the get-go, and are appealing the judge's decision. Ultimately, they hoped the lawsuit would wind its way up to the U.S. Supreme Court and serve as the case that would be used to overturn the Citizens United decision that opened the floodgates to dark money pouring into American elections in 2010. Granted, that plan was initiated before Donald Trump won the 2016 presidential election.

But this does not change the fact that Oregon has no limits on campaign finance contributions, which has created a landscape of increasingly expensive campaigns at both state and local levels. Those who are not independently wealthy or well-connected cannot afford a serious campaign for elected office in many of Oregon's more populous jurisdictions. A would-be candidate shouldn't have to be rich or in the pocket of millionaires and billionaires to represent the people of Oregon.

While this city measure would also likely be challenged in court, its passage would send another message to lawmakers that Oregonians, specifically Portlanders, are fed-up with their state's lack of campaign finance limits. We must continue attempting to rein in the out-of-control spending that's compromising our elected officials.

We're willing to see where this measure goes - it can't possibly make the local campaign finance situation any worse. Vote yes.

### MEASURE 102

Amends Constitution to allow local bonds to be used for financing affordable housing with nongovernmental entities.



Voting yes on statewide measure 102 will result in more people getting housed at levels they can afford by stretching the impact of general obligation bond dollars.

The Oregon constitution currently prohibits most local governments from raising money for or loaning credit to private entities. Housing authorities have to go it alone. Measure 102 amends the constitution so that local governments can partner with nongovernmental partners to use bond money for buying or building affordable housing. Why does this matter? This matches how affordable housing is actually financed. The contemporary reality is one in which builders of affordable housing finance projects by layering many different sources - federal, state, local sources, grants, bank loans, on and on.

With the passage of Measure 26-199 in the Portland metro region, Measure 102 will immediately be put into practice. The metro bond is estimated to house 7,500 people, but that extends to 12,000 with the passage of measure 102. And this impact will hopefully lead to other general obligation bonds for affordable housing across the state because, as our Housing Rural Oregon series shows, the need for deeply affordable housing is vast.

Vote yes on Measure 102 to make way for more permanently affordable housing built by communities across the state.

