

MEASURE

30

Backers armed with facts and figures say it can pass.

By Alan Pittman

With Measure 30 consistently trailing in polls, the state faces a billion dollar budget hit that could kick 85,000 poor people off health insurance, force prisons to release inmates and force schools to lay off teachers or close early.

The prospect has left state leaders gloomy and mum. Gov. Ted Kulongoski's lips aren't moving on the new taxes. A *Register-Guard* editorial recently dubbed him "Gov. Eeyore" on Measure 30.

But if Kulongoski's an Eeyore, there's a lot of Tiggers bouncing in the grassroots.

"My phone is ringing off the hook with people wanting to volunteer," says Joy Marshall of Eugene, who's campaigning for the measure as state director of Stand for Children. "This is a passable, doable measure."

"People are really, really concerned about this, and they're coming out to support this big time," says Dan Bryant, co-chair of the Lane County Yes on 30 campaign and a minister at First Christian Church.

Bryant says Eugene will be a key part of passing Measure 30. The failed attempt last year to pass state revenue Measure 28 actually passed in Eugene by a 61 percent vote. Eugene's strong support, particularly in 13 precincts around the UO and in the South Hills where more than 70 percent voted yes, was enough to push all of Lane County into the yes column.



With turnout in the Feb. 3 mail election expected to be low, Bryant says, "we can make the difference in the entire state, if we get out to vote."

Cost of Taxes

Measure 30 will cost taxpayers \$1.2 bil-

lion through 2007, but supporters say the burden will be spread fairly, based on ability to pay.

About two-thirds of the revenue will come from a temporary increase in income taxes. The increase will vary from 0 to 9 percent, depending on income. Taxpayers earning more than \$200,000 a year will pay an average of \$1,929 in additional taxes a year

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while those earning \$30,000 to \$40,000 would pay only \$43 more. Those earning less than \$10,000 pay nothing.

The steeply graduated tax increase means that the 68 percent of state taxpayers who earn

less than \$50,000 will pay only 11 percent of the personal income tax increase. The elite 7 percent of taxpayers earning more than \$100,000 will pay 60 percent of the tax increase.

Marshall says Measure 30 is the most progressive tax measure to come out of the Legislature in decades. "It's fair, affordable and very well written."

Besides personal income taxes, 21 percent of the tax increase will come from an increase in corporate income taxes. The corporate minimum tax will go up from \$10 and corporate tax loopholes for outside state income and tax credits will be tightened.

An additional 11 percent of the new revenue will come from halving the discount taxpayers get for paying their property taxes on time. The remaining 3 percent of Measure 30 comes from extending a 10 cent tax on cigarette packs.

Cost Without Taxes

If Measure 30 fails, state schools, health care, poverty programs, courts, prisons, police and other services will take a \$1.2 billion wallop.

Here's a rundown of the estimated state and local impacts for the current two-year budget:

Education - Cut \$363.7 million

K-12 schools would lose \$338 million or \$503 per student, forcing up to five more kids into every class and laying off 8,000 teachers or shortening the school year by about a month. Universities would take a \$16 million hit, and community colleges would lose another \$10 million, causing cuts in classes and tuition increases.

Locally, Eugene 4J would lose \$12.24 million, Springfield schools \$7.5 million and Bethel schools about \$4 million. The blow to Bethel and 4J would be cushioned this year by funds from the recent city of Eugene tax levy for schools, but the full impact will be felt next year. Smaller outlying county districts with no reserves could be faced with immediate dramatic cutbacks.

"It will get real drastic," says Virginia Farkas, a 4J parent serving on the district budget committee. She says her daughter already has classes with 42 kids at her high school. "I just don't think quality learning, as good as her teachers are, can happen."

The UO would lose about \$3 million and LCC \$1 million, with possible tuition hikes, class cuts and deferred maintenance.

Human Services - Cut \$231 million

Up to 85,000 poor people would lose their Oregon Health Plan medical coverage. The state would also stop helping the poor with subsidized drugs and mental health and drug treatment.

Locally, human services in Lane County would take a hit of roughly \$6 million to \$8 million. County assistance to seniors and the disabled would lose \$800,000.

Private charity can't come near to making up for the loss in government funding, says Bryant, whose church provides services to the poor from its downtown location. "I see that directly in just the amount of people that walk into our office who are just desperate," Bryant says. Measure 30 "provides absolutely critical funding for essential services."