

# A Healthy Oregon

Measure 50 is the right thing to do

**D**oing the right thing isn't always easy. Witness Measure 50, the Healthy Kids Plan. Voting in favor of this measure is, indeed, the right thing to do. And despite the critics' attempts to sway opinion, this issue is just too important to leave to RJ Reynolds and Phillip Morris, the powerhouse funders (to the tune of \$10 million) behind the No on 50 Campaign. Their real interests lie in increasing the number of young people who begin smoking every year. After all, raising the price of cigarettes has been proven to decrease sales, and that would mean lower profits for these out-of-state corporate giants.



Most important is what Measure 50 was designed to do and will do for Oregon:

- It will provide health care for 100,000 children, many of whom are already eligible but still need to be enrolled. This has been a cumbersome process in the past, but Measure 50 will streamline that process and provide assistance to those who need help with the applications.

- It will also add resources to the existing system to ensure that eligible children are enrolled. Healthy Kids provides money for safety net clinics, school based health clinics and rural health care and tobacco prevention programs.

- And it will enable us to add 10,000 adults back onto the Oregon Health Plan.

The questions raised by the tobacco companies/Anti Healthy Kids Campaign are troubling for many of us. Is the revenue stream provided by an increased tobacco tax sustainable? Do we really want to tinker with our constitution? Will the money really go to health care? Is this a fair tax? So let's really talk about these issues.

The state budget office looked at Healthy Kids before it went to the ballot. And, even taking into consideration the revenue drop caused by projected decreases in cigarette, there will be enough money for the programs outlined in Measure 50 for six to 13 years. By that time, Oregon will have universal health care (Senate Bill 329, passed and signed in 2007, is developing this plan now and will present a full report to the state Legislature when it convenes in 2009).

State constitutions provide more latitude and flexibility than does the U.S. Constitution. The Oregon constitution has been amended more than 250 times and is now 81 pages long. Is amending the constitution the best answer to children's health care? Maybe not, but it does provide some important protections. It codifies the money so that it cannot be used for any other purpose. And it codifies health care for children – who can argue with that?

All of the money goes to health care, all of it. At the beginning, there will be monies put in reserve in order to ensure stable funding over time. Responsible spending: Isn't that what we want?

**A**s to the issue of whether or not a tobacco tax is fair, let's just face it, our revenue system has inequitable taxes every which way you look: Not everyone pays the alcohol and beer tax, we don't all pay property taxes and we do all pay for public school although not all of us use those services. So, if revenue reform is on your mind, I suggest you start contacting your legislators and letting them know that this is an issue of importance to you.

Don't be swayed by outrageous amounts of money spent by out-of-state special interests trying to buy our votes. Doing the right thing isn't always easy. But Measure 50 is the right thing and, really, it is easy – just say yes.

*Susan Silodor is chair of the Health Care Caucus of the Democratic Party of Oregon.*

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## — ONE NIGHT ONLY — EXECUTION

A Film by Steven Scaffidi

**NOVEMBER 8, 2007**

Doors open: 6:30 p.m.

**Introduction and Film: 6:45 p.m.**

Room 175, Knight Law Center  
University of Oregon

The event is hosted by  
Professor Barbara Aldave.

Q & A session following the film with:

- Professor Joseph Metcalfe
- Steven Scaffidi, film director
- William Neal Moore, a former inmate who spent 16 years on Georgia's Death Row
- Mr. Moore's wife, Donna Jo Jacks-Moore

9:00 p.m. Reception to follow  
in the Morse Commons.

*"Everyone is talking about this incredible story which will change the way you look at the death penalty forever."*

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