

Candidates for Governor

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

John Kitzhaber

Q-8. Do you support the current Oregon law mandating employers in 1997 to provide and pay for 75% of health insurance for employees?

A. The answer is Yes, but I don't think we can wait till 1998. 1995 sounds pretty good to me.

Q-9. The next session of the Oregon Legislature must deal with the \$1.2 billion budget gap caused by further Measure 5 phase-in. Do you believe they should do so only by cutting or also by raising revenue and, if the latter, how would you propose they deal with the growing imbalance between business and household (individual) tax burdens?

A. I think we're under-invested in many public programs and services, particularly our educational system. I think we're sooner or later going to have to come to that recognition and make the investments necessary to have a workforce that can compete in an information-driven economy. I think it's unlikely we're going to have a major revenue source going into this biennium. When, I don't say if, when we get to the point we can have that discussion with people and have a receptive ear, clearly we have to look at the entire tax system, not just from the standpoint of the revenue it can raise. Part of the effort has to be to attempt to correct the imbalance between corporate taxpayers and individual taxpayers.

Q-10. What is your position on current prevailing wage laws and will you support, oppose, or remain neutral on the initiative petition being circulated repealing Little Davis-Bacon?

A. I will be very active in my opposition to that. . . .

Q-11. Will you oppose contracting out of public services when cost savings are generated primarily through lower wages and benefits?

A. Yes, I will. One of the problems we have in funding public programs, and services, and institutions in Oregon is that the average per capita wage now is about \$1,600 below the national average, so our economic development strategy has to be to produce jobs that are equal to or greater than the national average. The attack on Little Davis-Bacon and contracting out under those circumstances run counter to what the business community and many other people have been saying should be an objective of state economic development activities.

Q-12. What is your position on the OCA statewide and county initiatives?

A. I vehemently, actively, and passionately oppose the OCA's initiatives at the state level and the local level and I will be very, very actively involved in the efforts to defeat the measure that is expected to be on the ballot in November.

Q-13. Budget reductions and personnel cuts are going to result in greater workloads in many state agencies. Rather than accepting excessive employee workloads, what will be your approach to balancing the budget if there is no tax reform?

A. To the extent possible this is an area where I think we can hopefully work together. I think that continually "watering down" everything to the point that you can't do anything well is much less desirable than trying to make some crisp, clean decisions and making sure that you have workloads that are commensurate with the staff you have available. What that means, of course, is that you may eliminate and stop doing something all together and you know as well as I do that we're not going to make that budget without impacting some of your membership. But, I think we need people who can do the service, do it well, and do it efficiently.

Q-14. What is your position on the "Eisenzimmer Initiative"?

A. I am very much opposed to that and will be very active in the campaign against it. I think that the four initiatives that are going to be on in November, if they pass, are going to really commit this state to a future of mediocrity regardless of who wins the Governor's race, and one of them is that one. The other is the repeal of the school reform measure; one is the 6% pickup; and the other one is the Davis-Bacon. It is just frightening, the potential for polarization, and making it absolutely impossible for us to deal with issues like public safety or education.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Denny Smith

it is a problem. If you're getting 14.3% paid in by the state, I think it ought to be split between the employee and the employer.

Q-8. Do you support the current Oregon law mandating employers in 1997 to provide and pay for 75% of health insurance for employees?

A. No. The voters spoke when they had Measure 5, and yet the Legislature added a \$65 million program to the taxpayer in the Oregon Health Plan. If you mandate small business, they are going to start losing employees if they're going to provide benefits.

Q-9. The next session of the Oregon Legislature must deal with the \$1.2 billion budget gap caused by further Measure 5 phase-in. Do you believe they should do so only by cutting or also by raising revenue and, if the latter, how would you propose they deal with the growing imbalance between business and household (individual) tax burdens?

A. I don't believe we're going to get any more revenue out of the state taxpayers. You're going to have to look at every department, every program, because obviously every time there is a program, there's a manager, there is a trail of cost and expense that sometimes could be merged, sometimes can be done away with, might have to be privatized. 000.22.30

Q-10. What is your position on current prevailing wage laws and will you support, oppose, or remain neutral on the initiative petition being circulated repealing Little Davis-Bacon?

A. When you go out to buy a car, you don't buy the most expensive car. When you go out to try to do something for yourself, you try to get the best deal. When you're going to be building something for the state, we as the elected leaders ought to be trying to get the best deal for the taxpayers. If the Davis-Bacon Act requires we spend more money and it costs more to the state taxpayer, that's wrong. I don't support the concept of Davis-Bacon. I support the concept of free enterprise and trying to get the best deal for my company, myself, my taxpayers, and I think you should too.

Q-11. Will you oppose contracting out of public services when cost savings are generated primarily through lower wages and benefits?

A. No, but let me say this, we need to cut the best deal for the taxpayers in this state. We don't know whether it's because of lower wages. It shouldn't necessarily be. Maybe he happens to have better equipment; maybe there is a cost saving here because of the administration; maybe they don't have as many managers looking over this thing.

Q-12. What is your position on the OCA statewide and county initiatives?

A. I am not an OCA member; I do not support their initiatives. I do, however, feel that no group needs to have any special rights except the disabled. I am forcefully explaining that to people throughout the state. But I still don't think anybody needs any special rights. I agree with them from that standpoint.

Q-13. Budget reductions and personnel cuts are going to result in greater workloads in many state agencies. Rather than accepting excessive employee workloads, what will be your approach to balancing the budget if there is no tax reform?

A. In 1995 our task is going to be to look at every program in the state to be sure that we can reduce duplicate programs, programs that are similar where we have managers and staff and cost and everything that goes with it. We're going to have to go back and examine what kind of a government we really want to have and what is it doing for us so that the state worker is not going to be overburdened because clearly, we cannot put the burden of this on his back. We're talking about user-friendly government here again; we're talking about the ability for people to say, "I don't care what the answer is, but for god's sake, get me one." I think you're going to see people excited about coming to work to try to solve problems for other people.

Q-14. What is your position on the "Eisenzimmer Initiative"?

A. I'll vote for it, but again, you're seeing the frustration of the taxpayer and his trying to interface with government. But as long as the Legislature is unable, incapable, and basically unwilling to address these issues and try to solve them, you're going to have a continuation and it will get stronger. How do you get around it? By doing a good job and retaining and gaining back the goodwill of the voter and the taxpayer. We've got to be working together; we've got to weed out people, not allow them to protect themselves through the union system. I'll talk mostly about the fact that we need to do a better job managing and doing legislative activities.

I realize, I don't expect to get your endorsement. And yet, I think that if you review what I've said to you and review the new economic realities that we're all living with as taxpayers, as state employees, as citizens of this state it isn't going to be the way it used to be. No one wants to hurt the people working presently and I don't think we have to, but we certainly are going to have to change in the next decade or two to meet the demands of the revenue system.