

KeizerOpinion

KEIZERTIMES.COM

Opposition to payroll tax

To the Editor:

I was listening to a fellow business owner this past weekend. This is how he explained the impact of the proposed employer payroll tax on his business: "It will cost me, personally, one month's pay. This means that I will get paid for 11 of the 12 months I work." As a small business owner in Salem myself, I adhere to the old adage for business owners, you have to do right by your partners (if any), employees, suppliers, creditors and customers. Then if there is any left you take care of your family and yourself.

In this instance, my fellow business owner will take a pay cut if this tax passes. Please vote *no* on the employer payroll tax. No one should go without their paycheck.

Eric T. McMullen
Salem

To the Editor:

These are reasons why I am encouraging you to vote no on Measure 24-388.

First, we need a broader conversation on the wants and needs of mass transit in the Keizer-Salem area. Mass transit is a need, weekend and later hours during the weekdays, in my opinion, is a want.

Secondly, the percentage of people using mass transit is too small. I applaud Cherriots for making the changes in the first phase of their Moving Forward. With the correct focus and encouragement, more people will find that taking the bus to work is easy. With time and effort the ridership numbers may increase to warrant a need of additional services.

Thirdly, this proposed tax for increased services is unfair. The people (businesses) in our community who will have to pay extra taxes are already paying a fair share of the costs that provide the current services. Others pay too (government and the people who ride the bus). Cost of additional services should be spread among all, if that is what we determine we need.

Finally, we can work together to find other solutions. I want to think we can without having to hurt a singled out segment of the working class. I want to explore sustainable options. We need small businesses in our town to survive and prosper.

Christine Dieker
Keizer

To the Editor:

I am a third generation family business owner. For three generations our family has managed to run a business that provides a needed service to our customers, gives back to the community, and provides our employees and ourselves a living wage. My dream has always been that the fourth generation, my son, will continue this legacy.

But this dream gets a little dimmer every time the federal, state or local government decides they need more money for their operation. Every time taxes and/or fees are imposed on a private business that business has to work twice as hard to make up for what is taken from their bottom line.

The Salem Keizer Transit District is currently asking you to vote to impose a tax on my employee payroll. Expanded public transit in Salem-Keizer is desirable; it benefits the entire community. Phase 1 of the Moving Forward Plan has yet to yield any indications of increased ridership. Those results need to be analyzed before implementing Phase 2. More importantly expanded public transit should not be the responsibility of only one segment of our community.

Transit is a community service and it deserves a community solution. Please vote no on M24-388.

Larry Jackson
Salem

To the Editor:

The Employer Tax that our transit district is trying to impose on private sector employers and the self-employed is unacceptable and unfair. While I agree that transit does play a critical role, I adamantly disagree with the proposed funding mechanism. Citizens cannot expect the business community to shoulder this burden alone. Inexcusably, two of Salem's largest employers, the State

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of Oregon and Salem-Keizer School District are exempt from this new tax. How does that make sense and how can any reasonable voter

see this as being fair?

If our community believes that it is necessary for transit to expand services then the entire community should pay, not just 1 percent of the population. Current fares are \$1.60 for an adult and 80 cents for a student. Riders should certainly bear some responsibility for expanded service.

Portland and Eugene impose an employer payroll tax for transit. Over the last 10 years, they have raised taxes 10 out of 10 years in Portland and seven out of the last 10 years in Eugene. Businesses could see their taxes double within 10 years. This is unacceptable and needs to be stopped. I am voting no. Join me in putting a stop to the employer tax.

Ryan Allbritton
Salem

Support for payroll tax

To the Editor:

Salem-Keizer once had one of the state's leading community transport systems. Less than a decade ago, the district enjoyed a ridership exceeding 5 million. Unfortunately, revenue cutbacks, inevitably followed by service cutbacks, have resulted in declining ridership. Last year, Cherriot carried 3.6 million. Salem is currently the only city in the Northwest with more than 100,000 people that do not have Saturday bus service.

Our community now has an opportunity to restore services that were cut and to create a pathway for increasing ridership in the future.

That's why I am voting "yes" for the Salem-Keizer Transit (Cherriots) measure (No. 24-388). And I hope you will too. The measure would allow Cherriots to provide weekend and holiday bus service, extend bus runs later into the evening hours during the week and offer free bus passes to middle- and high-school students. It would also allow the CherryLift to operate on weekends and holidays and, more generally, enable to Cherriots to fully implement its "Moving Forward" agenda, helping to meet the growing transit needs of Salem and Keizer.

All of this would make our community a better and healthier place to live and likely give a bit of a boost to the economy by way of increased business activities and more vibrant, community-connected neighborhoods. It would certainly help those without cars – seniors, students and the disabled – participate more fully in the life of our community.

This would all be achieved through a modest 0.21 percent tax on business payrolls. For half of the private firms in the Salem-Keizer transit district, the "expense" would amount to no more than \$168 a year, or less than 50 cents a day. By any fair measure, in fact, this should be viewed not as an expense but an investment that will provide valuable returns to the community and local economy.

The wage tax has proven a viable way to provide community transit services in Portland and Eugene, both of which have implemented broad strategies to improve their transit systems. Portland's community transport system is considered among the nation's best and Eugene's community transport system now carries more than 11.5 million riders each year.

Opponents of the measure have had six years to come up with an alternative proposal to restore the weekend and evening service. They have failed to do so, and they shouldn't now be standing in the way of a measure that is long overdue.

Community transit systems have gained an increasing presence across Oregon from Portland to Corvallis to Eugene. Public transit is now widely recognized as a critical agent for social and economic progress, as well as a vital sign of a community's forward-looking thinking. Support for the Salem-Keizer Transit measure (No. 24-388) is not just the right thing to do; it's the smart thing to do – for the

Many issues keep my mind busy

from the capitol

By BILL POST



Once again I am honored and privileged to serve you the good people of Keizer (along with St. Paul, Newberg and parts in between) in the Oregon Legislature. This month is sort of a "grab bag" of thoughts.

First off, I am always surprised at how many people I talk to who aren't even aware there is an Oregon Legislature. I talk to a lot of people around town, by e-mail and social media, and many are not aware that the session of 2015 even happened, especially those it affected the most: businesses. In the 2015 Session, there were several laws passed that will further burden businesses in our district and that greatly concerns me. I get excited to read the *Keizertimes* and see new businesses start up or old ones grow larger – this is success for all of us, not just the business owner. This is the main reason I am opposed (not as your state representative, but as Bill Post, the guy who lives in a home in Keizer) to the Salem-Keizer transit payroll tax. I have seen the very difficult choices business will have to make beginning in 2016 thanks to the Oregon Legislature – they don't need another burden.

Second, I love the weekly poll in

the *Keizertimes*, as it tells us a little bit about our community. Last week it featured a question concerning the amount of guns in our households. Thirty-four percent said they had no guns while 66 percent said they did, with 30 percent saying they had 10 or more guns. I am encouraged by that as we have a right, thanks to the US and Oregon Constitutions, to own those guns and it seems Keizerites revel in that right.

Lastly, I am concerned for the youth of our community. The "millennials" in particular (since my own son would be considered in that group). I watch as government has tried to make their lives easier, yet instead, their future success is appearing more elusive. By expanding entitlements to so many, those of my generation are saddling young people with debt that they'll

Is the world of the middle class coming to an end?

gene h. mcintyre

Those attending the forum learned from keynote speaker Jim Tankersley of *The Washington Post* that the reasons for the slowdown include the loss of manufacturing jobs due to automation gains in the American workplace and foreign competition. Then there are the declining earnings for those without college degrees while those in the technology and finance sectors see gains.

While there was an effort to bring Wall Street to heel eight years ago, there's little that has changed. Additionally, mortgages and small-business loans are more difficult to get, while the paperwork required to obtain them has been significantly increased. Meanwhile, the student loan payback burden diminishes these folks from the purchase of quality-of-life consumer items—mainly homes—but other big consumer-purchase items, too, even by those able to secure relatively high-paying jobs.

It would seem that the U.S. could do much better at making inroads to the re-building of the middle class if we stopped warring overseas where American taxpayers now spend \$10 million every day fighting ISIS in Iraq and Syria. We've obviously gained little or nothing from our warring in Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq, and now Syria except to deplete the U.S. Treasury, greatly increase the national debt and lose American lives. There is so much that could be done inside our own nation if we'd husband our tax dollars and stop borrowing from overseas to spend on projects here, putting millions of underemployed Americans back to work on re-building the nation's infrastructure and reinstate our

leadership in research and development in technology and communications. Of course, there is need of many reforms at home here that keep getting put off while our national leaders fight with each other.

All jobs in the U.S. related to every level of earning should be the dedicated focus of Congress and the administration. If those folks in Washington, D.C. would turn away from their fixation on warring overseas to working together, bringing to a halt special congressional committees to investigate other politicians for partisan gain, we could soon realize progress. However, until the leadership positions in our nation's capitol are held by responsible Americans determined to improve the common good and not just out to keep themselves in office, we'll continue to limp along, losing ground on every facet of life here that once were the hallmarks of a great nation.

We must again learn to work together as when we succeeded in our independence and winning wars against the Empire of Japan and Nazi Germany. As President Franklin D. Roosevelt said in his first inaugural address mainly regarding the demise of almost everything in the U.S. by the Great Depression: "Let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself—nameless, unreasoning, unjustified terror which paralyzes needed efforts to convert retreat into advance."

Let us remember that imminent doomsdays have plagued humankind since our arrival on Earth: Giving up in the face of what appears insurmountable should be unacceptable to us.

(Gene H. McIntyre's column appears weekly in the *Keizertimes*.)

community, for business, and for our future well-being. It deserves a "yes" vote on November 3.

Daniel Schaffer
Keizer

To the Editor:

To our new city councilor Amy Ryan: Please remember you are a councilor for all the residents of Keizer, not just the business people.

I challenge you to put your car keys up for two weeks and use public transportation (this means going to work, buying groceries, keeping appointments, shopping, church, recreation, etc.). Accept no rides and no fair having others do tasks for you.

Businesses will raise prices if necessary to keep their profit margin intact. Those who buy the goods and services will actually be paying for a better bus system.

Julia Ann Goin
Keizer

KFD levy is needed

To the Editor:

On behalf of the Keizer Volunteer Firefighters Association members, we the KVFA board are writing to support the Keizer Fire 2015 Equipment Bond measure. In addition to our regular jobs, we volunteer as firefighters. We are well-trained and volunteer regularly

letters

so that we are able to respond quickly and effectively when there is an emergency. We can't do that, however,

without reliable equipment.

The Keizer Fire District was started by volunteers and continues to use them today as one way to save tax payers' money. We would like to urge the citizens of Keizer to help us help you by voting yes for the bond measure for emergency equipment.

Keizer Volunteer Firefighters Association
President – Bill Herring

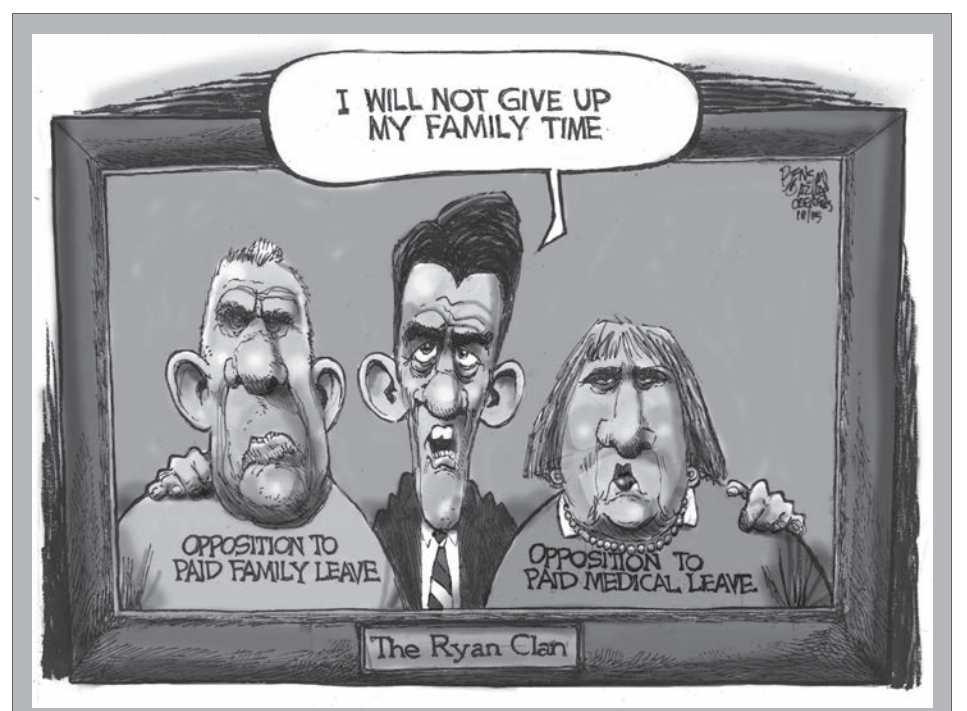
Vice President – Dale Slater
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At Large Member – Jason Perkins

One grocery store?

To the Editor:

How can a town of over 35,000 have only one major supermarket? Talk about a monopoly. I hope the Chamber of Commerce can come up with something so that we don't have to go over to Commercial to do our grocery shopping if we want a choice.

Marge Willson
Keizer



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