

# Keizertimes

SECTION A

JANUARY 5, 2018

\$1.00

## The nut of Measure 101

### How do voters want to fund healthcare?

By ERIC A. HOWALD  
*Of the Keizertimes*

On Jan. 23, Oregon voters will decide whether or not to keep some major sections of a bill designed to help pay for healthcare for the state's low-income individuals and families.

Ballots should be arriving soon asking voters whether they approve of the House Bill 2391's methods for paying these costs or reject certain financial aspects of the bill.

As written, HB 2391 imposes, among other things: temporary assessments of 1.5 percent on premiums charged by health insurance companies for a time period of two years; and an additional .7 percent assessment on large hospitals.

Those assessments drew the ire of Rep. Julie Parrish (R-37 Tualatin/West Linn) and Rep. Cedric Hayden (R-7 Roseburg) the chief petitioners behind Measure 101 that voters will be asked to decide on.

"We have surgically extracted five pieces. If we

#### YES VOTE

Adds additional funding for roughly 1 million Oregonians enrolled in the Oregon Health Plan.

Lowers the cost of insurance for 210,000 Oregonians purchasing coverage in the individual market.

Maintains the ability to receive substantial federal matching funds.

#### NO VOTE

A no vote would create a hole in the state budget of \$210 to \$320 million for the current fiscal year with the additional loss of federal matching funds.

During the short 2018 session, state legislators would have to figure out how to come up with additional funds from other areas or seek cuts in health care programs or in other areas (like education or public safety) of the state.

At greatest risk would be Oregonians who don't get insurance through their employer. Coverage might be reduced or eliminated.



wanted to blow up Medicaid, we have the ability to refer the entire package to the ballot," Parrish said.

Parrish and Hayden took it upon themselves in recent weeks to visit newspapers throughout the state to drum up opposition to the funding mechanisms included in

the bill, but neither claimed opposition to the social safety net created by programs like Medicaid and Medicare.

The main points of their argument hinge on the way money will change hands and what will happen after it ends up in government accounts.

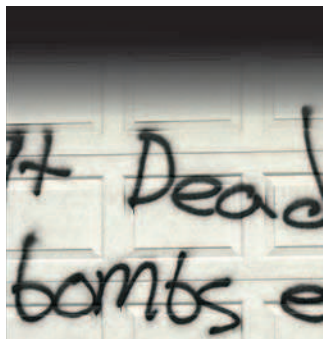
At issue are sections of the

bill that: impose an assessment on the gross premium amounts collected by the Public Employees' Benefits Board; impose a 1.5 percent assessment on the insurance and managed care organization premiums; allows insurance companies to pass along the 1.5 percent increase to policy

holders; and establishes a new .7 percent assessment on large hospitals.

The new assessments are expected to generate an additional \$210 to \$320 million, but those figures are only part of the equation. The Please see MEASURE, Page A7

**Celts slay Timberwolves**  
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**3 charged with threatening graffiti**  
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**Local firefighters battle California blaze**  
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**Wounded Warriors reel 'em in**  
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## It's coming

Keizerites might just be shopping at Waremart by Winco at the end of the month.

Keizertimes reached out to a spokesperson for the business last week and didn't receive a reply, but a sign posted on the front of the store at 5450 River Road North suggests the grocer plans to open by the end of January.

That's not the only indicator that things are moving ahead at full speed.

On Dec. 29, the city issued Waremart's occupancy permit suggesting that construction is complete. In addition, the Keizer City Council approved Waremart's liquor license in a unanimous vote Tuesday, Dec. 2.

A sign in the new Waremart by Winco building heralds an opening by the end of the month.

KEIZERTIMES/Eric A. Howald



## City has little recourse when homes sit vacant

By ERIC A. HOWALD  
*Of the Keizertimes*

The house at the corner of Sieberg and Arnold Street in south Keizer looks abandoned from the street. Several of the windows are boarded up and "Black Mold" is scrawled across plywood in black Sharpie on the main entry, a

warning to those that might try to gain access. However, the most cursory of glances shows the tell-tale signs that not everyone has heeded the caution.

A detached storage shed door is cracked open, but there isn't anything of value in sight even after it's opened further.

Cast off tools and buckets along with what looks like a furnace all appear to have seen better days. Another open entry in the rear of the house grants a clearer perspective on the likely condition of the main living space.

Even before sliding the door further ajar, the smell

of mold and mildew is overwhelming. A mattress lies rotting on its side, on top of that a bright red pillow chair is turning black with decay. The ceiling, aside from one stalwart patch, has all fallen in on the room.

The home is owned by a Salem man, but there hasn't

been any regular occupancy in a while. In the intervening time, it's become the "creepy house" for local youth, said one neighbor. Students from nearby Claggett Creek Middle School dare each other venture inside, others abscond with schoolmates' backpacks and notebooks at school and then toss them into one of the open doors meaning the victim has to summon up the courage to retrieve them, he said.

Vacant and abandoned properties are not an albatross around the neck of Keizer as much as other cities, but when problems do arise, city officials don't have the tools to correct the problems that some other jurisdictions do.

"It's difficult because whenever we are dealing with property rights, we have to walk a fine line," said Community Development Director Nate Brown.

At any given moment, Keizer Code Enforcement Officer Ben Crosby is trying to oversee activity at about six vacant or abandoned homes and the livability issues that tend to crop up around them.

"Typically, we have two types, ones that are being foreclosed on and then empty rentals," Crosby said.

Attending to the needs of the properties is only one of Crosby's many duties and



A vacant home in south Keizer is attracting unwanted attention, but the city has little recourse for dealing with such homes. KEIZERTIMES/Eric A. Howald

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