

Voters given option to renew tax for Seaside School District

Programs at risk should option tax fail

By KATHERINE LACAZE
EO Media Group

SEASIDE — A special election Nov. 3 will give voters in Seaside School District 10 the option to renew a five-year local option tax to fund operations at the district's four schools.

Ballots were sent out Wednesday, and voters have until Nov. 3 to turn them in.

The question on the ballot asks if the district should renew its 0.52 tax per \$1,000 of assessed property value for five years beginning 2016-17.

The measure would renew a tax in place since 2000 to support the school district, which includes Seaside High School, Broadway Middle School, Seaside Heights Elementary School and Gearhart Elementary School for students from Seaside, Gearhart and Cannon Beach. This is the fourth time voters have the option to renew the levy, according to Superintendent Doug Dougherty.

If the measure is approved, the levy will be renewed at the same rate for the next five years, starting with school year 2016-17. Residents will not see an increase because of the local option tax.

According to the state's Department of Revenue, most taxing districts are allowed to ask their patrons for temporary taxing authority above the permanent rate limitation. This authority is known as a "local option tax." Local op-



Submitted Photo
Erin Jackson, left, and Lori Lum, members of the Vote For Kids committee, hold up signs of support for renewing a local option tax for Seaside School District 10 during a football game. The tax will be up for vote during a special election Nov. 3.

'Good education leads to good community.'

Lori Lum, co-chairwoman, Vote for Kids

tion taxes are limited to five years for operations and up to 10 years for capital construction purposes.

Overall, more than \$6.5 million would be raised through the local option tax. This estimate is based on current data available from the Clatsop County assessor. Seaside's total school budget for 2015-16 was just over \$21 million.

The additional revenue has to be used for operational costs, or to maintain current programs, services and

staffing levels at the schools — items that directly impact students' classroom experience. It helps offset the costs of extracurricular activities and sports, which are "very attractive to prospective teachers" and help the district bring in and retain quality teachers, Dougherty said.

If the measure does not pass, the district will need to make reductions in programs and increase class sizes.

Co-chairwoman Lori Lum of the Vote For Kids committee, said she believes

HOW TO VOTE

Voters can turn in their ballots at several local drop sites:

- Clatsop County Clerk & Elections Office, 820 Exchange St., Suite 220, Astoria
- Cannon Beach City Hall, 163 E. Gower
- Gearhart City Hall, 698 Pacific Way
- Seaside City Hall, 989 Broadway

All drop sites will be open until 8 p.m. on Election Day to receive ballots. For more information, visit www.co.clatsop.or.us/clerk/page/elections.

the measure "is vital to the school district." The committee, established about four months ago, raises awareness for the measure through presentations, handing out information and setting up signs. Lum has four children in the school district and has seen the positive benefits of the additional revenue, but she said she would still be in favor, even if she didn't.

"Good education leads to good community," Lum said. "I'm all for a greater, stronger community and educating our kids."

The local option levy is not related to building new school facilities at a different location. A bond measure to do so was proposed in 2013 and failed. Dougherty has said the district likely will present a new bond measure some time in the next year and a half. Renewing the local option tax is the first concern, however.

"We've been trying to keep that separate," Dougherty said.

Wyden talks gun 'rights and responsibility'

By ANTONIO SIERRA
East Oregonian

BOARDMAN — In the wake of the Umpqua Community College shooting, the national debate over gun control and mental health has centered around Roseburg.

In his first town hall meeting since a 26-year-old man killed nine people, U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden carried on that debate in Boardman on Sunday.

Some in the crowd were decidedly anti-gun control, with one man saying school shootings were the result of people not being able to protect themselves because they're in "gun-free zones." According to The Oregonian, UCC is not a gun-free zone and students with guns and concealed firearm permits were on campus at the time of the shooting.

Wyden said legislators must find a way to balance "rights and responsibility," finding a sweet spot between protecting citizens' Second Amendment rights while also closing loopholes like straw purchases.

Irrigon resident Sue Oliver asked Wyden about the federal government's ban on funding for gun violence research.

The Democrat said the law was introduced by former U.S. Rep. Jay Dickey, an Arkansas Republican who recently told the Huffington Post that he has since re-



AP File Photo
U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Oregon, shown here speaking on Capitol Hill in June 2013, held a town hall Sunday in Boardman where the audience questioned him on gun control and Planned Parenthood funding.

gretted pushing the law after mass shootings like the one at UCC.

Despite early discussion focusing on gun control, questions from the audience soon veered into questions and comments about mental health.

Wyden asked for comments from George Shimer, a school resources officer for the Boardman Police Department and the husband of Riverside High School Principal Marie Shimer.

Shimer said he would like better integration of the police force and mental health organizations to give him

more latitude in dealing with people who are suffering with mental illnesses.

Wyden said there needed to be a better warning system for potentially dangerous people with mental illnesses to prevent violent incidents.

Many in the audience pointed the finger at the lack of mental health facilities in Eastern Oregon.

Morrow County Sheriff Ken Matlack said there

haven't been any adequate facilities in vicinity to the county since the state closed the Blue Mountain Recovery Center and Eastern Oregon Training Center, with one of the closest facilities being the Juniper Ridge Acute Care Center in John Day.

"They broke something on purpose and had no fix at all," he said. "That's what's frustrating."

Morrow County Court Judge Terry Tallman said increasing mental health opportunities was one of the county's top priorities.

The audience requested answers for other hot topics, like the recent investigation by Congress into Planned Parenthood after an anti-abortion group accused the organization of illegally selling fetal tissue.

Wyden said he supported a woman's right to abortion but also supported alternatives like family planning, foster care and adoption.

A local physician's assistant said the federal government should direct its family planning dollars to clinics that provide those services without doing abortions instead of Planned Parenthood.

Wyden countered with the fact that none of the federal government money that goes to Planned Parenthood pays for abortions.

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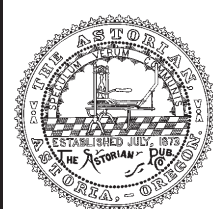
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