



Governor Bob Straub chats with Eliot School students following dedication of Unthank Plaza, HAP sponsored housing for the elderly on Williams Avenue.

Measure 7 threatens state medical education

by Elaine Herscher

PNS — In the first election of its kind, Oregonians will decide whether to completely eliminate state funding of abortions.

If the measure, Proposition 7, passes women whose lives are endangered by pregnancy or those who become pregnant as a result of rape or incest, would not be eligible for state-funded abortions. In addition, the measure would cut off state money for "programs or services promoting abortion."

Thus, it could bar the University of Oregon from teaching abortion procedures to medical students and from conducting prenatal screening for genetic defects. Depending on the measure's interpretation, counselors at state-funded family planning facilities might not be permitted to discuss abortion as an alternative to pregnancy.

While 38 states already have cut back on some funding for abortions, the Oregon measure is the most far-reaching to date. Also, the controversy in Oregon is unique in its emphasis on financial arguments, even on assigning a monetary value to the fetus.

According to Chris Kowitz of the Yes-on-7 Committee, the measure is not an anti-abortion initiative, it is a "fiscal issue with moral overtones." Kowitz said it was proposed to alleviate the tax burden on Oregonians who are opposed to abortion.

"We do not feel it's the proper function of state government to extract tax money from citizens when such a large segment of the public believes abortion is wrong," he said. "Those who feel abortions should be provided free should donate money to that service."

But Mary Heffernan, campaign manager for the opposition group, Taxpayers for Choice, said the issue is much more than a financial one. "The initiative is a powerful emotional red herring for the whole right-wing swing. It is anti-minority and anti-social services. It goes way beyond abortion rights. But these people wouldn't be concerned about their taxes if they weren't opposed to abortion."

Her group contends that most Oregonians are not opposed to abortion. She said a poll for the organization indicated that eighty percent favor public funding for abortions to save the mother's life and for other extenuating circumstances.

Both sides, however, have speculated on how much — in dollars and cents — a life is worth. Taxpayers for Choice claims that if "high-cost 7" wins, taxpayers will have to pay eight times more for social services providing prenatal care and delivery for women on welfare. Heffernan, citing the state fiscal impact statement on Prop 7, said implementing the initiative will cost \$4 million a year — more than current expenditures for state-

funded abortions.

"It does cost more to carry a baby to term," Kowitz acknowledges. However he has computed a different set of figures. The \$4 million figure is "short-sighted," he said. A one-year-old will contribute \$100,000 to society in his or her lifetime, according to Federal Highway Commission statistics, Kowitz noted. "The babies of today are the workers and taxpayers of tomorrow." If they are eliminated, he asked, "who will be around to pay our Social Security?"

According to Heffernan, that is "an absurd argument . . . What about the lost productivity of a mother's being unable to work? I think there are a lot of problems with our Social Security system, but the answer is not to force one class of women to bear children."

Taxpayers for Choice has raised about \$75,000 to be spent on television and radio advertising and state canvassing. The Yes-on-7 committee has less than \$30,000, but it claims more support. A spokesperson noted that the goal of collecting 36,000 signatures to get on the ballot was met in 36 hours, and there were 30,000 extra signatures.

According to the Taxpayers for Choice poll, the voters are split, with about fifteen percent undecided. Both camps hope media campaigns will pull in the undecided votes, but they concede the outcome will be close.

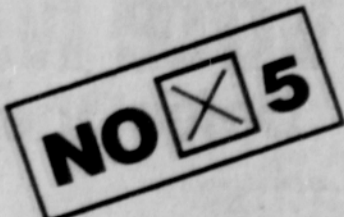


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A "Mess With Measure 4"

That's how the Corvallis **Gazette Times** sees it, if this proposal to make 20 drastic changes in laws governing the financing of Oregon PUDs is not defeated.

PUDs are political agencies with the authority to levy taxes, float bonds, and otherwise obligate taxpayers for the purpose of providing electric (or water) service.

Measure 4 Gives a Blank Check to Political Agencies

It costs millions of dollars in public debt when a PUD condemns and takes over another electric system

Under present law, as the Bend Bulletin points out, voters have a "chance to learn the price tag before they give the final approval of the formation of the district. Measure 4 would trade that chance for a blank check. It should be defeated."

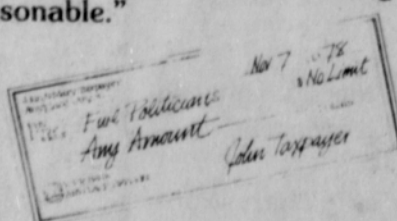
Why is Measure 4 a Blank Check?

Because it gives elected officials of a political agency unrestricted approval to issue revenue bonds in **any amount** to condemn and buy or to construct an electric system.

"The notice of election...shall state that revenue bonds are proposed and that they would be used for the acquisition or construction of an initial utility system. **Neither the election notice or ballot shall be required to state the amount of revenue bonds to be issued.**" Measure 4, Section 14(2)

They don't even have to tell you how much public debt they intend to pile up! And you never will have the right to vote on the amount!

This is why the Eugene **Register-Guard** stated that, "The blank-check approach to financing new PUDs throughout Oregon is unreasonable."



Would You Sign This Blank Check? NO!

VOTE #4 NO.

NO ON 4 COMMITTEE
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