

Election '96

There is no free lunch

BY LEWIS TAYLOR

The sponsors of Measure 47 are con artists, pure and simple. They are promising something for nothing--vote for this measure and pay less property taxes but still receive the same services. Schools won't suffer, they say: somebody will pay the bill but they never say for certain how it will happen. There is little difference between this con and the one in which some guy says give me \$1,000 cash as good faith money to claim some found fortune and you will receive the entire \$50,000 fortune by the end of the day. Something for nothing!

As you know, Measure 47, commonly called "cut and cap", is the measure that rolls back (cuts) your property tax to the 1994 level and restricts its increase (caps) to 3% per year regardless of need, regardless of disasters like last winter's floods and wind storms, and regardless of the increase in inflation, economic growth, or population growth.

Measure 47 sponsors are the same folks who gave you Measure 5--promised your property tax bill would be lower and nothing would suffer. It reduced the source of income for schools and local government and promised that the state would "make up loss". Homeowners got a small break but businesses got a major windfall. In the meantime, restaurants are selling apples at \$5.00 each and raise money for schools as a result of Measure 5; kids and parents marched in the streets to raise money for schools. The Portland Public Schools has set up a foundation--an arm of the school

devoted entirely to raising money. Schools are supposed to be in business of educating people, not raising money. Is that any way to have a well educated society, capable of thinking and reasoning and helping make society better?

If local government has less money than it does now, how can it provide after school programs to provide young people with options to the drug dealers and gang recruiters? Preventive programs can be funded for. I would guess, around \$400 per year per kid, considerably less than the \$40,000 per year it will take if we do nothing and let that child grow up in trouble with the law and ultimately in prison. If we can't provide options to keep kids from going wrong, what hope do we have of reducing the number of people going to prison? If we pass this measure, in a few years, the bulk of our tax dollars will be spent on courts and cops and prisons. No society ever received much benefit from the dollars it spent on prisons--no cures for cancer or stroke, no new inventions or discoveries to take the chemicals out of the drinking water we drink or pollutants out of the air we breathe. Moreover, we will be standing in congested streets and freeways breathing in carbon monoxide because the resources to fix the roads will be diverted to schools if this measure passes.

Measure 47, sponsored by the same folks who brought you Measure 5, is again making promises it cannot keep--schools and local government will not suffer. It is the old advertising gimmick that you get something for nothing. That just plain

isn't impossible. There is no unknown Santa Claus. As you know, kids believe in Santa Claus but Santa is really Mom and Dad. Well, will your Mom and Dad pay for the services that will disappear if this measure passes? Mine won't! And although they say let "George" do it, I can't even find a "George" who will contribute his pot of gold.

This measure does highlight a problem: the problem is the threat to people on fixed incomes of losing homes they worked for all their lives. We need to hold policy makers accountable for addressing this problem. But this measure is using that problem to yank on the old emotions to get you to go for this poorly conceived, devastating measure. Be responsible!! There is no free lunch, and there is no free services. If you do not vote for Measure 47, don't go to Salem asking someone else to provide the services that you know will disappear.

Lewis Taylor is a single individual who has spent over 40 years working for state and local governments from support positions to upper management. Throughout much of his career, he has been responsible for reviewing and evaluating government programs ranging from the regulation of the use of pesticides in agricultural environments to construction of wastewater treatment facilities to programs to protect infants and children from child abuse and senior citizens in nursing homes from abuse by nursing home operators and their families.

Modern Taxes and You

BY JO ANN BOWMAN

When I was a little girl, I heard my parents talk about how high their taxes were getting every year, and how big a bite taxes took from their income. I asked them if it was that bad, why pay taxes at all?

They replied that taxes were how we paid for public goods and services. Buses had to have drivers and fuel, firefighters had to have trucks and hoses, potholes in the road had to be patched, and parks had to have grass and swings to play on.

It was our duty as working people, they said, to contribute to our community, and paying taxes was one of the necessary ways to do so.

Rising taxes are not a new development, and as the community grows, so do our taxes.

My annual property tax bill is high, and for some the amount due is oppressive. This is a consequence of our antiquated and unfair tax code, not a measure of the value of the necessary services those taxes pay for.

Tax reform must be a top priority of the 1997 legislative session. The levying of taxes has to be fairer and more equitable than it is now. A good start on that reform would include increasing the Homestead Exemption for seniors and others living on fixed incomes, so that people won't have to face losing a home they've had for decades.

The sponsor of Ballot Measure 47 has his own ideas of how to change property taxes (he wants to reduce services), and he wants to change the Constitution while he's

at it. Measure 47 is being touted as a way to keep your taxes from "going through the roof", and on that note alone it sounds satisfying. After all, who doesn't want to pay lower taxes?

The problem is that Measure 47 does much more than lower taxes. It will stick us--the People of the State of Oregon--with a great deal of negative baggage, and it will take a lot of time and huge sums of money to undo the damage Measure 47 will cause to our communities.

For starters, Measure 47 would cut next year's (1997-1998) property taxes to the 1995-1996 tax level, minus 10% (or 1994-95 level, whichever is less), regardless of what our communities' needs might be! Next, any future tax increases could not exceed the arbitrary figure of 3% per year--again, regardless of what our needs might be.

Further, Measure 47 would require any votes on future taxes to be approved by at least 50% of registered voters, and lock this requirement into the Constitution.

Note that Measure 47 doesn't say that a tax issue has to pass by at least 50% approval, it says that 50 percent of all registered voters have to vote for approval. In other words, non-votes would be counted as "no" votes.

The fact is that seldom do more than 50 percent of registered voters vote in special or non-presidential elections. Measure 47 would make it very nearly impossible to pay for new services, let alone maintain existing ones. How's that for fine print?

If Measure 47 had been in place this year, none of the recent levies would have passed. Schools would do without earthquake protection, the Portland Metropolitan Zoo would be on the road to disrepair and decline. And since the jail bonds would not have been paid and the new jailhouses had to be built (last year's Get Tough on Crime measure mandated building more jails but did not say where the money to pay for them would come from), the money would have to be taken from the general state budget, which would mean yet more cuts in services. Bridge repair, building inspection, police, special needs youth, your child's education, or street lights and hydrants--which would it be?

The tax system is in need of reform, but Measure 47 would lock the current inequities into our Constitution. There are better ways to make those necessary changes than through Measure 47.

If you need one more reason to vote against Measure 47, it's as close as your voters' pamphlet. All the arguments in favor are submitted by just one person--a man who makes his living by being negative--while the arguments against Measure 47 include a wide variety of people who don't normally agree with one another, but all recognize their responsibility to join forces on this issue and defeat Measure 47.

Join me, Jo Ann Bowman, in the stroll to the poll this coming Tuesday, November 5th, and vote NO on Measure 47. Oregonians cannot afford this tax break!

Listen to the Former Deans Committee

The following Measures have been judged by The Former Deans Committee to be in conflict with our United States Constitution or to have some other fundamental flaw that makes it important that this language not be included in our State Constitution. The Former Deans Committee's opinion is important to consider because they take no position on the other merits of the measure and thus provide a more nearly unbiased view than one can expect from the others.

Measure 27: "This appears to be an unlawful delegation of authority from one independent branch of our government to another... We believe the separation of powers guarantee of our United States Constitution would require a court to strike down this measure since no appointed legislative committee could constitutionally prevent our elected Governor from performing faithfully his/her authority or duty to execute our laws."

Also, "The appointed legislative

committee could never equally represent the citizens of Oregon..." To this view, we would add that the proposed legislative committee would amount to another layer of government, and that decisions would be far more subject to partisanship and political maneuvering, and less resulting from the work of expertise and objectivity. Vote no on Measure 27.

Measure 33: "This provision against change is even for obvious or unintended errors... The Measure would limit the citizen's right of free expression and equal protection under the United States Constitution." Vote no on Measure 33.

Measure 40: "...we believe Measure 40...fails the 'one subject test' as defined by the Oregon Supreme Court." "A voter who is hoping to expand the rights of victims would not expect to find hidden within Measure 40 (provisions) to permit non-unanimous jury verdicts in murder cases...to permit preventive detention without reasonable bail...and

limits to...rules relating to privilege and hearsay (evidence)..." Vote no on Measure 40.

Measure 45: "We believe Measure 45 raises serious issues under the United States Constitution...It is clear whether Measure 45 deals with current PERS retirees, current state/local government employees, future state/local government employees or all of these groups...Measure 45 is vague and unpredictable." Vote no on Measure 45.

Measure 46: "We believe there are serious questions that Measure 46 is unconstitutional...that this Measure would effectively deny the people and the Legislature the ability to raise funds for education, law enforcement, prisons, health care and other needs for the people of the State of Oregon...This Measure would violate the one person--one vote rule established by the United States Supreme Court and interfere with the fundamental operations of Government guaranteed by the US Constitution." Vote no on Measure 46.

Measure 36--an opportunity for economic independence

BY AVEL GORDLY, (Chief Petitioner for Ballot Measure 36; State Representative, House District 19 in Northeast Portland)

Oregon Minimum wage workers struggle to survive on less than \$800 a month...Forced onto public assistance to afford food and other essentials for themselves and their children...unable to afford childcare or healthcare. Willing to go back to school for a better job, yet unable to do because of the cost.

Imagine taking home \$826 per month before taxes. All the while knowing that \$577 goes to rent. Subtract another \$75 for taxes...\$100 for utilities...\$160 for childcare...\$200 for food...\$50 for gas plus car insurance. Already in the hole and haven't yet provided clothes for your children or school supplies, and you can't consider \$10 for them to go to the movies with a friend.

Forty percent of minimum wage earners are the sole breadwinner in

their families. 69% are adults over the age twenty. And 62% are women. We're not talking about teenagers, we're talking parents who work 40 hours a week and can't put food on the table. We're talking about the 111,629 Oregon children who live in poverty.

These are the minimum wage workers that need a raise. These workers deserve a shot at economic independence. These are the workers that create the wealth of our state, but are not allowed to share in it. Oregon can do better.

Over 200,000 Oregonians earn less than \$6.00 an hour. These hard working parents and families are the reason I am a chief sponsor of Ballot Measure 36, an Oregon answer to the problems of low minimum wage that forces people onto our welfare rolls.

Ballot measure 36 raises Oregon's minimum raise to \$5.50 an hour next year...\$6.00 an hour in 1998 and

\$6.50 an hour in 1999. The Raise the Minimum wage Coalition now has over 60 member organizations, ranging from the State Council of Senior Citizens

and the Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon to the Oregon Public Employees Union and the African American Legislative Roundtable.

Last year I introduced legislation to raise the minimum wage to \$6.35 in Oregon. The bill was refused even a public hearing by a legislature more concerned with corporate tax breaks than providing Oregonians with the opportunity to work their way off of welfare.

Let me be clear. No program we enact...no legislation we pass...Can do more to help working Oregonians off of public assistance and toward jobs with dignity than raising the minimum wage.

If we want true welfare reform, we

Continued to page B5

3 officials — all Democrats — back Fitz

Mike Burton, Gary Hansen and Gretchen Miller Kahary are also lining up against the governor and labor.

By AVEL GORDLY

"I think Fitz would better serve the community...I don't think (Wilde) is qualified to hold public office."

Mike Burton

Former State Representative N/NE Portland

— Mike Burton, The Oregonian, 10/11/96



FITZ for State Senate