

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

What are the big ideas on property tax this year?

Heads up, homeowners. For Oregon reformers, you are next. A legislative committee is meeting this week to look at property taxes.

Will you end up paying less? Or more?

We don't know exactly what ideas the committee will consider. But it's not hard to guess, because legislators bring some ideas up repeatedly.

The big one is: Reset on sale.

Property values in Oregon do not reset on sale. They are artificially limited thanks to Measures 5 and 50. Basically, older homes had an artificial value created to determine their taxes — the assessed value. Their maximum assessed value was set at their real market value in 1995 minus 10%. And they can only go up by 3% a year. That has benefited people in older homes in areas that have been gentrifying.

The system we got from the ballot measures also has created other oddities, such as two similarly sized homes in a neighborhood having very different tax rates.

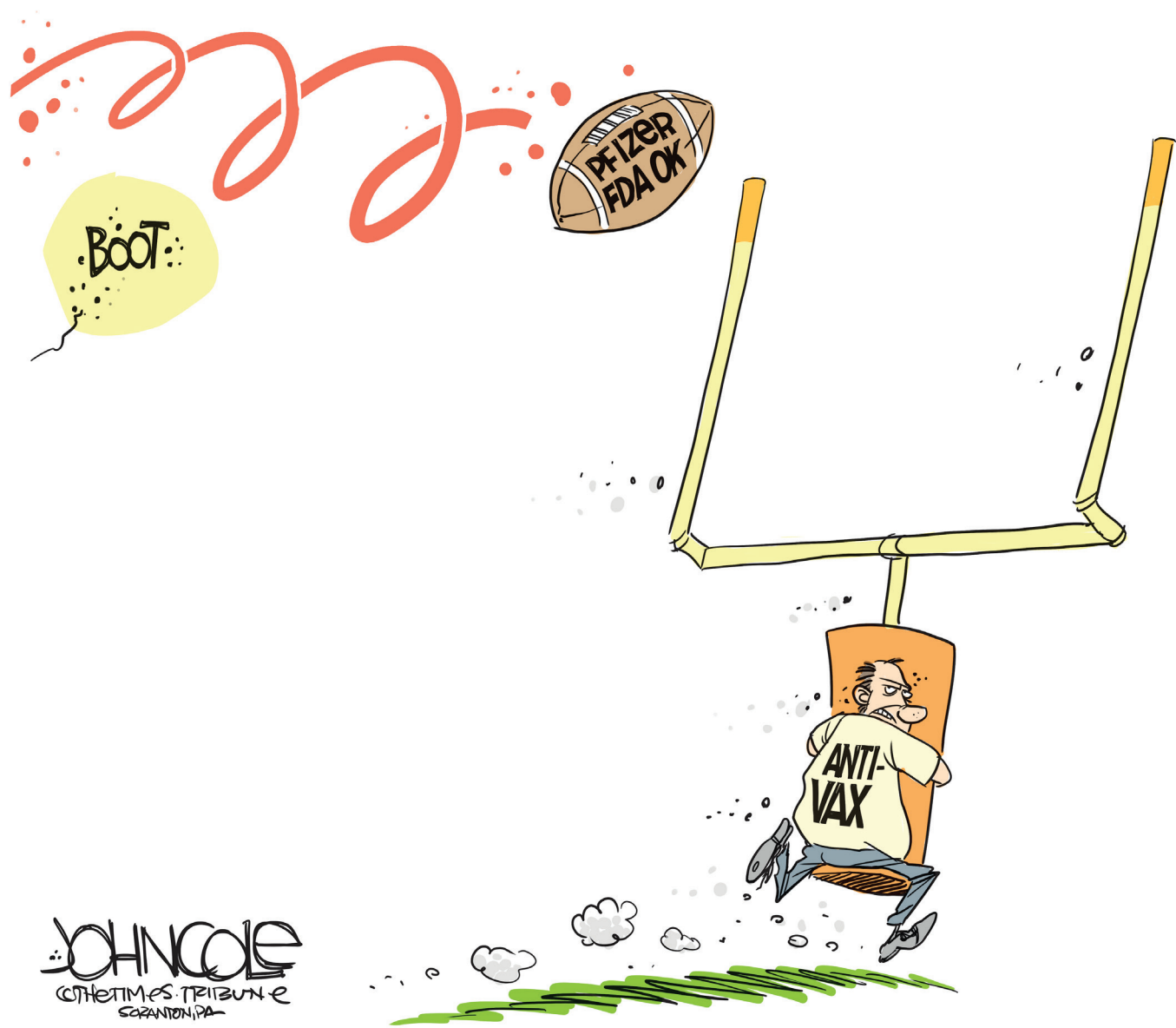
What's the real problem with this system that helps keep property taxes low? Doesn't it ensure government has to spend money carefully? Yes, but ...

The "but" is the controls on property tax revenue can mean governments can be more reliant on fees. And fees can be relatively more difficult for low-income people to pay, while people who are richer benefit from owning homes.

Of course, any changes that are made to the property tax system could be hard on some family incomes. That's why reformers talk about including some safety valves. There could be exemptions to protect a certain value of a homestead from taxes, relief for seniors, and also flat-out refunds for taxes that are believed to be too high. But how and where would those be set?

One other idea the committee is set to discuss is the prepayment discount — such as getting a 3% discount for paying your property taxes in full by mid-November. We don't know if the committee will talk about getting rid of the discounts. It might.

If you are interested in what your government might do to your property taxes, a House Interim Committee on Revenue meeting that was held earlier this week is available online so you can see what was discussed.



Still shaking my head to 'rona responses



TAMMY MALGESINI
INSIDE MY SHOES

Iam baffled by some people's gung-ho attitude about unproven off-label use of medications in an attempt to treat or prevent COVID-19 — yet they are reluctant (and in some cases, dead set against) getting the vaccination. While I'm not a doctor — although my signature would qualify — it intrigues me that people even started using Ivermectin, which seems to be popular with social media virologists these days.

Information from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration indicates it's used primarily with dogs, cats and other mammals as prevention for heartworm disease and for the treatment of certain internal and external parasites with horses and other animals. As far as human use, the Food and Drug Administration has approved tablets — which are specifically formulated for adults because, you know, we weigh a lot less than cows and horses — for treating some parasitic worms. Also, humans

can use a topical formulation to treat some external parasites and skin conditions.

Seriously, so who was dosing up Rover or Sugar and thought, "Hmmm, I wonder if taking this could prevent the 'rona?"

And it seems some people are confused by the English language or don't have a dictionary handy. They often refer to COVID-19 vaccinations as experimental because they haven't received full approval of the FDA.

The fact is, getting the jab only became widely available after each of the vaccines received emergency use authorization from the FDA. Pfizer, which received EUA in December 2020, was granted full approval for its vaccine Monday, Aug. 23.

According to a report from The Associated Press, the process "required a 360,000-page application and rigorous inspections." That doesn't sound very "experimental" to me — in fact, it seems more credible than someone hearing the second cousin of a neighbor's co-worker used their horse pills and got better overnight.

I think it's odd that some people are so willing to pop a pill — a horse pill at that. That feels more questionable

than rolling up a sleeve for a vaccine that has jumped through so many hoops it could win an NBA championship.

Just as curious are those who negate the potential benefits of wearing face coverings. I agree masks aren't 100% effective. However, they have some value in reducing the spread of respiratory droplets — hypothetically, if I were to spit in your direction, wouldn't you prefer that I had a mask on? While merely a straw poll, most of my friends haven't even had a cold in the past 18 months. Coincidence? I think not.

And since today is National Dog Day, I would be relegated to the doghouse if I didn't give a shout out to the General and Biko, our German shepherds. Rest assured, my husband and I will spoil them in some way.

Rather than getting worked up over people that baffle me, I'll take a lesson from our canine kids — I'll tilt my head and stare blankly.

Tammy Malgesini, who returned as an East Oregonian community writer, enjoys spending time with her husband and two German shepherds, as well as entertaining herself with random musings.

YOUR VIEWS

Afghanistan fallout will be dire for United States

Because of the debacle in Afghanistan, it will be many, many years before any intelligence assets will work with the United States again. There are countless mistakes our national leadership has made; one cannot count the unintended consequences that will rain down upon us. I could name at least 20 different outcomes that will ensue.

The Chinese, Russians, Iranians, North Koreans and a host of other enemies of the U.S. will have picked up some very valuable classified weapons and secret equipment.

One is watching the fall of a great nation, the United States of America.

Government used to be by the people, for the people and of the people. Now it is for the government and by the government. One is no longer a citizen but a slave to bureaucrats.

Roesch Kishpaugh
Pendleton

Stuck in the 20th century

Like it or not, our federal government will be pushing us into the 21st century

at a rapid pace, spending billions of our tax dollars on infrastructure updates and technology, broadband internet service for all and a transition to electric cars, trucks, buses, trains, and even airplanes.

I hoped that Pendleton's city officials had begun to look to the future with the appropriate actions to take advantage of this rapidly changing technology. Broadband internet for everyone: In itself, it's an amazing system — information, books, and music available at the speed of light on your phone, tablet, laptop or desktop computers. Those new overhead lines going up are the beginning. They're pretty ugly; aesthetics and attention to detail have never been one of the city's strong suits. But moving them underground is not a high priority.

I was quite taken aback that rather than take advantage this gift, our library staff, with the approval of the city manager, mayor and city council, has decided to thumb their nose at this latest opportunity to reach more of the community electronically, and have instead decided to invest \$127,952 of what they continue to refer to as "free money" in the form of a grant through the American Rescue Plan (the federal COVID-19 rescue plan) for a new Ford

F250 XLT with a custom van box, a "bookmobile." It will allow the library to reach out at the astonishing speed of around 25 mph to all those adults and children that don't live within walking distance of the library.

What about that significant investment in public transportation designed to provide affordable transportation to facilities such as the library? Has it failed? To gain public support, the program is also aimed at our children. Thing is, they'll be in school. According to our school district, each school other than the early learning center has its own library.

So, what is the rationale for purchasing a "bookmobile" rather than more computers or books? They tell me the purchase of a bus, just like those taxi vans and buses, is stipulated in the grants. I suspect, in the end, the "busmobile" will spend more time sitting parked for lack of a driver than roaming our city streets and Mission, much like all those buses and vans the city continues to purchase with more "free money."

It kind of makes you wonder how Hermiston does it. Evidently they've embraced the 21st century.

Rick Rohde
Pendleton

EDITORIALS

Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the East Oregonian editorial board. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the East Oregonian.

LETTERS

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