

Oregonians, not corporations, will pay IP 28 tax

Oregon voters in November should think twice before voting for Initiative Petition 28, the gross receipts tax measure on the ballot.

The measure — pushed by public employee unions, education and healthcare advocates and other liberal interests — proposes Oregon's largest tax hike ever. It would impose on "C" corporations an additional 2.5 percent tax on gross sales in Oregon exceeding \$25 million.

IP 28 would raise as much as \$3 billion a year for the state's general fund, and is touted as a panacea for unspecified spending priorities in search of a funding stream.

Oregonians are fond of raising taxes that they themselves won't pay, particularly if in the process they can stick it to big, out-of-state companies that they say aren't paying their fair share. Supporters of IP 28 fondly point out that 70 percent of the companies that would directly pay the tax are not domiciled in Oregon, and include big retailers, big banks, big oil, big pharm — big, greedy companies carrying away Beaver State boodle to Arkansas, Wall Street and Moline. No downside here.

A compelling argument, if only it were true.

Enter Doug Hoffman, president of farmer-owned Wilco — one of the big Oregon companies that will pay the tax.

Wilco is a cooperative set up to sell merchandise and services at a discount to its 3,000 farmer members. Separately it also operates 12 retail stores in Oregon, mostly in the Willamette

Valley, selling all comers a wide variety of products with a decidedly farm and ranch bent.

Without any of the bluster one expects from the robber barons IP 28 means to punish, Hoffman lays out the company's finances. Under Oregon law, the \$100 million in direct sales of products and services to members are exempt. The \$100 million in sales at the retail stores are not. A portion of any profit is returned to the members.

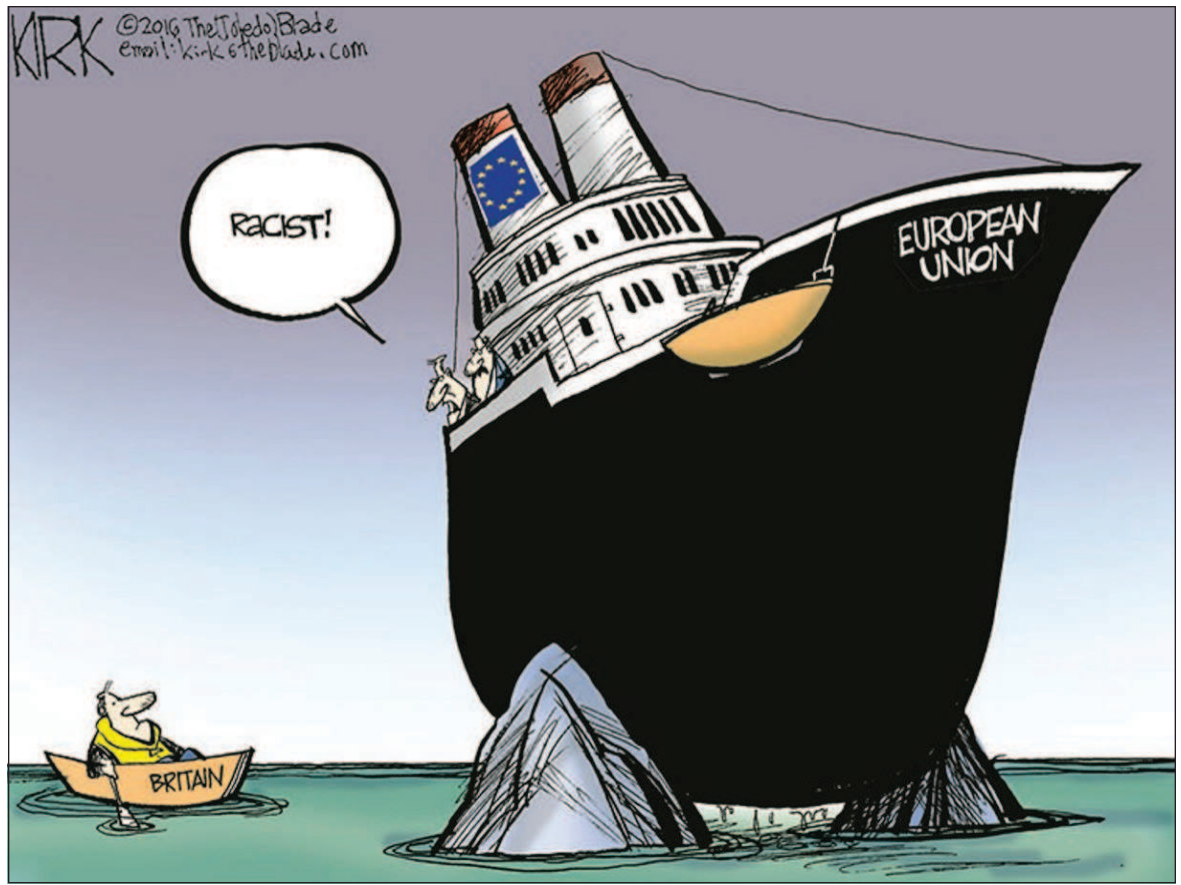
In a good year the retail operation has a net profit of as much as \$2.5 million. That, coincidentally, is the amount Hoffman says Wilco will pay in corporate income taxes if IP 28 passes.

Because IP 28 taxes gross receipts, not net profits, Wilco and other businesses with the requisite sales will pay whether they make money or not. Hoffman says there have been years when sales have been high, but the retail business has run at a loss. In that case, the tax bill will come out of reserves.

Hoffman and others say the biggest myth of this, and every corporate tax increase, is that regular Oregonians won't pay the tab. They will.

Businesses will increase prices to cover the extra taxes they owe and to pay prices increased by suppliers burdened by their own higher taxes. They'll cut back on employees to reduce operating expenses. They won't invest in expansions.

To facilitate its passage, IP 28 supporters have picked a small segment of the business to paint as unsympathetic targets of their tax. But if passed, Oregonians and many of the state's iconic brands will fall victim.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Recall accusations are vague

To the Editor:

First, we have disagreed with County Commissioner Boyd Britton several times during his tenure. That said, we believe the recall against Commissioner Britton is not in the best interest of Grant County.

Most of the accusations are vague; some we believe are false. We believe the recall process serves as a valuable tool to keep Oregon government honest. It should be used objectively and only when absolutely necessary. Cases such as malfeasance and/or when a crime has been committed are a couple of examples; in this instance, we do not believe this is the case.

Recalls have a tendency to breed. They should be resorted to only after thoughtful deliberation.

The last thing this county needs is more turmoil and vicious rumors. The best place to make your opinion heard is at the ballot box in a regular election. We urge you to vote no to recall Commissioner Boyd Britton.

Phil and Peggy Gray
Canyon City

cer that he pledged to uphold the law.

That just makes sense. Simple right? Well, our current sheriff has made it known that he will enforce the laws that he deems right. Besides that he has on social media claimed that he is a "constitutional" sheriff, making himself the highest authority in the county.

Now just step back and think about this, our current sheriff believes that the state police, the federal marshals, FBI, ATF and all other law enforcement agencies are subservient to his authority. I'm a senior citizen, and I grew up believing that there are federal lawmen, state lawmen, county sheriffs and city police and that they worked together and enforced the law! I have never heard in my lifetime any of these law enforcement agencies say they were the ultimate authority, or that they would decide what laws they would enforce. This ain't Texas, the current sheriff isn't Judge Roy Bean and he is not the law west of the Pecos. I would invite all the folks that live in our beautiful county to vote for Todd McKinley, a good and honest man.

Oran Wyatt
John Day

Join me in supporting Commissioner Britton

To the Editor:

Over the 14 years that Boyd Britton has been our county commissioner, he has made decisions that I have definitely disagreed with. But several decisions are not grounds for a recall!

The four decisions that are listed in the recall petition are:

1. not always fighting road closure discussions by the Forest Service;
2. refusal to support an additional investigation into the Canyon Creek Complex fire;
3. failure to stop "Britton Welding" from doing work for agencies in the county;
4. misrepresenting his intentions about attending a militia meeting Jan. 26, 2016.

When I talked to Mr. Britton about these issues, he had very good reasons as to why he thought his actions were in the best interest of Grant County.

Are these four decisions reason enough to ignore all of the hard work that Boyd has completed to bring definite benefits to our county?

A similar effort in Harney County, with a similar limited agenda, recently tried to recall their long time county judge. Their effort failed by 70 percent!

Please join me in voting to support Commissioner Boyd Britton's continuing efforts to fight for all of Grant County!

Mike Cosgrove
John Day

'By grace are ye saved through faith'

To the Editor:

Russ Denton's piece in last week's paper was basically a paid advertisement for the old gnostic heresy, which is a combination of Oriental theology, Greek philosophy and Christian doctrines. It was the greatest rival of Christianity in its infancy and rears its ugly head again today. Gnostics profess to have a deeper understanding or wisdom. Despite all of his beautiful scripture references, his conclusions are wrong; Johnny Carson used to say, if you buy the premise, you buy the bit. You don't need to know where heaven is to go there; the thief on the cross didn't have a clue where it was, only that he knew where his Savior was and that was enough for him to go to paradise (wherever that is). Mr. Denton's idea that you go to heaven because you follow his ordinances, the law, is faulty because no one can; we go to heaven — or not — because of the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ on that cruel cross at Calvary and no other way. His assertion that the "Age of Faith" has now ended with the beginning of the Age of Reason, which is Gnosticism by definition, has been refuted numerous times even in his favorite translation, the King James Version. "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourself: it is the gift of God." — Ephesians 2:8.

Richie Colbeth
John Day

'I've got your back'

To the Editor:

"I've got your back" — a phrase heard a lot in Grant County the last few years. Generally spoken by the Grant County Court and Commissioner Boyd Britton. When using the phrase who was he referring to? Almost exclusively it was in support of another government agency. Harney County Judge Steve Grasty, Malheur National Forest Supervisor Steve Beverlin or Gov. Kate Brown.

"I've/We've got your back" has become a mantra in the County Court, but it is only reserved for those who play along with authority figures, and those that are seen as part of the social fabric of the community. You've seen how that works in last week's paper with Mr. Beverlin coming out to sing the praises of Mr. Britton and his work ethic with the Forest Service, not much to anyone's surprise since Mr. Britton has told him on more than one occasion, "We've got your back."

As a public official, Mr. Britton is to remove himself from anything that has the appearance of a conflict of interest, and he lays it out very clearly that for the last five years he has averaged roughly \$4,200 in payments from the Forest Service, while they bring forward business to the court, that he not only votes on, but lobbies for, all while he applies for jobs, while lobbying the merits of Forest Service policy. That is not "baseless." That's a clear conflict of interest. It's just unfortunate he cannot see it.

Mr. Britton is clear in his statements; he does not believe Grant County has the guts to remove him from office. He thinks he will slide right through this. Time will tell, but for me it's an easy ballot cast, and it's a yes vote to remove him from office.

John D. George
Bates

McKinley 'a good and honest man'

To the Editor:

I would just like to give my reasons for deciding to vote for Todd McKinley for sheriff. When Todd threw his hat in the ring, he stated that when he took his oath of office as a peace offi-

WHERE TO WRITE

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- **Oregon Legislature** — State Capitol, Salem, 97310. Phone: (503) 986-1180. Website: www.leg.state.or.us (includes Oregon Constitution and Oregon Revised Statutes).

- **State Rep. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario** (District: 60), Room H-475, State Capitol, 900 Court St. N.E., Salem OR 97301. Phone: 503-986-1460. Email: rep.cliffbentz@state.or.us. Website: www.leg.state.or.us/bentz/home.htm.
- **State Sen. Ted Ferrioli, R** — (District 30) Room S-223, State Capitol, Salem 97310. Phone: 503-986-1950. Email: sen.tedferrioli@state.or.us. Email: TFER2@aol.com. Phone: 541-490-6528. Website: www.leg.state.or.us/ferrioli.
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