

Vote 'no' on Oregon Measure 97

Oregon voters in November must reject Measure 97, the gross receipts tax measure on the ballot.

The measure — pushed by public employee unions, education and health care 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.

The measure is expected to raise \$3 billion each year, or \$6 billion for the biennial budget cycle.

At first blush, Measure 97 seems like a no brainer. The state faces a \$1.5 billion shortfall in the coming biennium as it assumes more of the costs of expanded Medicare under the Affordable Care Act and struggles to cover shortfalls in the Public Employees Retirement System fund.

An extra \$6 billion would seem to solve those problems, plus put more money into schools and other programs that have been short-changed since the Great Recession.

But when you dig deeper, the measure's problems are apparent.

Supporters of Measure 97 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 electricity, big pharm — huge, greedy companies carrying away Beaver State boodle to Arkansas, Wall Street and Moline.

The big retailers that would be hit — Walmart, Walgreens, Safeway, Target, etc. — account for 88 percent of the retail sales in Oregon, making Measure 97 a fairly

broad-based sales tax. By the Legislature's analysis of Measure 97, a full \$4.1 billion of the tax will be passed on to consumers in the form of higher prices or reduced wages and opportunities.

It seems businesses don't pay taxes, but consumers do.

In addition to the big box retailers and the Fortune 500 the tax would hit a whole bunch of iconic Oregon brands such as Powell's Books and Wilco. The burgeoning software industry that has of late fueled Portland's boom would be particularly hard hit, as all of their sales originate here.

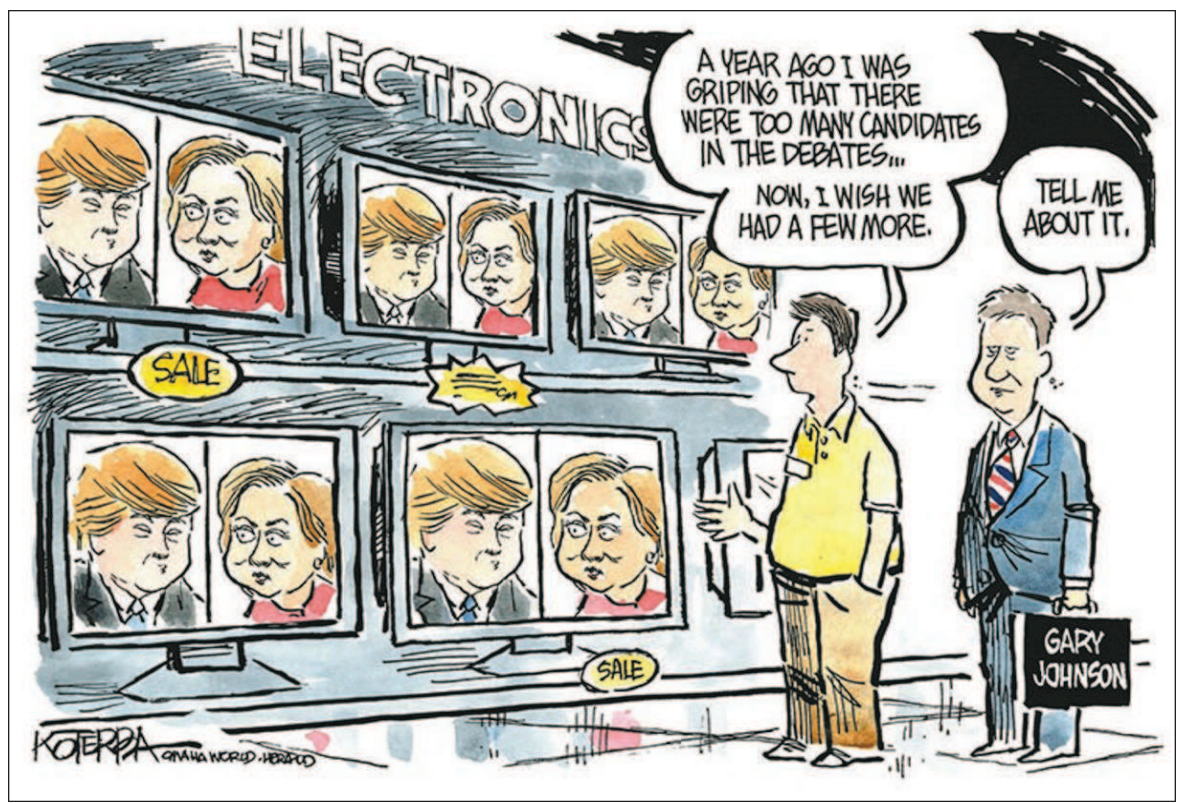
Because Measure 97 taxes gross receipts, not net profits, low-margin businesses with the requisite sales will pay whether they make money or not. In that case, the tax bill will come out of reserves.

Nonetheless, supporters argue Measure 97 is all for the kids, the old and the sick.

But the Legislature's lawyers say lawmakers can spend the money any way they want. An extra \$6 billion will go through the Legislature like guano through a goose. While the public employee unions will benefit and government will expand to sop up the money, we doubt many of the problems facing the state will be solved.

We would prefer the Legislature take stock of the state's needs and present a reasoned reform of Oregon's finances that includes specific targeted outcomes for revenue increases.

To facilitate its passage, Measure 97 supporters have picked a small segment of businesses 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

Collaborative group's motive to feather 'their own nest'

To the Editor:

One only has to look at the key voting members of the Blue Mountain Forest Partners, the local collaborative group, to see through their motives. Their cronyism amounts to feathering their own nest and diligently protecting it.

The executive director receives a salary of \$50,000 or more. One member has water trucks for fires that depends on the goodwill of the Forest Service to be hired. Another is overall boss of a local firefighting entity.

There is a paid advertiser for the sole stewardship contractor for the Malheur Forest. Round that off with a well paid attorney from an environmental organization, and one can see why "coordination" is worrisome to the collaborative group. Just wanted to shed a little light on the subject.

Herb Brusman
John Day

Constitutional sheriff pleads Fifth Amendment 51 times

To the Editor:

According to a Sept. 27 Oregonian article, Sheriff Glenn Palmer was forced to testify at a video deposition at which he was forced to invoke his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination no less than 51 times.

If he's re-elected sheriff, will Palmer later possibly (1) be indicted for crimes; (2) attempt to take administrative leave with full pay during his entire criminal prosecution and one paid by hard working Grant County tax payers; and/or (3) seek to have his criminal defense lawyer paid by hard earned tax dollars?

It's a crime to destroy public records in Oregon. I believe Palmer intentionally deleted public emails sent to and received by him as sheriff. According to the Oregonian article, Palmer invoked his right against self-incrimination (1) when asked whether he reviewed the legal definition of "public record"; (2) when asked about his own email exchanges with the Grant County district attorney; (3) when asked about whether the emails were public records, if copies existed, where he filed printed versions and why they weren't released to the Oregonian after it requested them; and (4) when asked about other documents which he previously said under oath he didn't have, but which other government agencies subsequently provided to the Oregonian.

What possible motive did Palmer have (1) intentionally to delete public records which are required by law not to be destroyed; and then (2) be forced to protect himself from possible incrimination by "taking the Fifth" no less than 51 times? Was it possibly because the deleted public emails provided incriminating evidence

of possible crimes by Palmer?

Should Palmer's professional conduct cause Grant County residents possibly to question Palmer's professional competence, professional judgment, professional credibility and professional integrity?

Brian McDonough
Bennington, New Hampshire

Election more vital than the last

To the Editor:

This November 8, "truth" will be on trial. Just as oil and water don't mix, and dirt and water make mud, there is such a thing as absolute truth. Both sides can't be right, when one says up and the other says down. It's up to "we the people" to ponder and check on each important factor. Ever hear of this?

The truth shall set you free! Don't we deserve to know it, and informed, before we vote? Every election seems more vital than the one before. Ask for wisdom from above, and don't rely on emotional decisions, but on what policies and who would be best to lead this great nation, for us and for the future generations.

Mya Ennis
Mt. Vernon

'The media has painted me as the Annie Oakley of the geriatric hordes'

To the Editor:

In response to a news item in the Sept. 28 issue of the Blue Mountain Eagle, "GCSO investigates its own special deputy who shot a dog she says attacked her":

An interesting point was that Mr. Taylor, owner of the pit bulls, did not put in an appearance until after his dog (who escaped from a "closed door") attacked and I had walked away to avoid a second dog.

He would have been unable to see my dog in his driveway because my dog, an aged yellow Lab, was right by my side in the middle of the street.

Self-defense is a great motivator when an aggressively charging dog is less than 3 feet away, and the victim is unable to run or deflect an attack of a 50- to 60-pound pit bull. Dogs of this sort of instability are plentiful in Canyon City and John Day, according to reports provided during the Canyon City Council meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 20, and a featured article in last week's issue of the BME.

I find it ludicrous that the incident has turned into another attempt to smear a local county law enforcement officer. Not sure how being a special deputy equates to a civilian's self-defense, but we all know this was reported by a skewed media with what appears to be an over-worked personal vendetta. I was very impressed with the quick response by John Day dispatch and follow up by the sheriff's office. As to be expected, one uninformed female claimed the handling of the investigation by the sheriff's office as a "good old boy system."

There are those who trespass into unfamiliar territory and are ignorant

of the fact that the county sheriff is the preeminent authority in Canyon City. At this point, the media has painted me as the Annie Oakley of the geriatric hordes. More irony exists when a similar incident was reported by TV news last week of a man whose dog was attacked in the Portland area and the owner of the attacking dog was cited.

Judy Kerr
Canyon City

'2 pit bulls attack woman walking her dog'

To the Editor:

God bless the BME — with a brick! Titillating headline: "GCSO investigates its own special deputy for shooting dog." First sentence in the article "... investigated an incident ..." I'm sure GCSO investigates all incidents reported to them. It's their job. And we know all incidents reported are not run on the front page.

Rather than another in a series of articles about the real problem (i.e., dogs running at large, attacking other dogs, biting people). No, BME uses this as another attempt to cast aspersions on the Sheriff's Office. The headline should have been "2 pit bulls attack woman walking her dog." Judy Kerr was not acting in any capacity she may have as a special deputy. She was a citizen walking down the street at 6 a.m. in Canyon City.

If she had been Jane Q. Citizen, this would have been played out entirely differently in the BME. As for D.A. Jim Carpenter's comments, I don't think he ran down to the BME to offer them. Pretty obvious a reporter went to him and specifically asked about any "bias."

Ethically, he should have responded "no comment," as it's an ongoing investigation. In reality it's just another incident in the grand witch hunt. Easy to see through for anyone with a half or less a functioning brain.

While we're on the subject (somewhat), 25 years ago I moved to Grant County from the valley. The number of pit bulls rises fairly proportionately with the increase in drug traffic. Don't believe it? Call Multnomah County Sheriff's Office. My husband and I see pit bulls running at large every single time we go to John Day.

And before you responsible pit bull owners get your knickers in a knot, I love pit bulls. I spent years rescuing and rehabbing them, trying to educate the public about them. They are all about what is best in a terrier.

When the breeding is good, when they are socialized, not abused. But they can be, and sad to say often are, a lethal dog. What if Judy had been walking along with a 5-year-old child? Would the headlines have been different? Assuredly so.

Patti Yellow Hand Bull
Monument

Editor's note: The headline would have been the same if the sheriff's office investigated its own deputy-involved shooting.

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CORRECTION

Last week's history section article about the F.C. Sels Brewery mistakenly stated F.C. Sels was married with children. F.C. Sels' brother Frank R. Sels was married to Vella, and the six children mentioned were their children. The Eagle regrets the error.

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.
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