

# Lawmakers approve largest tax relief bill

The Legislature's new tax program is the largest tax relief measure ever approved by an Oregon Legislature.

During the next two years, it will distribute some \$700 million to Oregonians in the form of property tax relief and

income tax cuts.

About \$300 million of the program will come through state assumption of 30 percent

of the property taxes of homeowners. Another \$200 million will be distributed through the low income home-

owner and renter property tax refund program (HAARP).

The rest of the money will be distributed to income taxpay-

ers via a 9 percent rebate on the income taxes paid by Oregonians in April this year. The income tax portion of

the program will also increase the personal exemption next year from \$750 to \$1,000 for each taxpayer, and, in future

years, the personal exemption will be increased along with cost of living increases. Also, the amount of federal tax deduction allowed will be increased from the present \$5,000 to \$7,000.

This means that inflation will no longer automatically push taxpayers into higher tax brackets.

There are various forms of limitations included in the tax package. State government spending could not increase at a rate greater than the growth of personal income in the state. Local government growth would be limited by complicated formulas contained in the dual ballot approach to be used in determining local levies and expenditures.

The first relief contained in the program will be the income tax refunds, which will be ready for distribution in the Fall. The 30 percent property tax reduction also would become effective then.

The entire program will be placed before the voters in May, 1980—to give the people the chance to either continue the program or send the Legislature back to the drawing board.

The program certainly isn't a perfect one, but then there's no such thing as a perfect tax program!

Incidentally, a concept which I introduced in the special session held last Fall has been incorporated in the program. State biennial general fund expenditures other than for tax relief and bond payments could not increase by more than the growth in personal income in the prior two years. If state revenues exceed that limitation by more than 2 percent, the surplus would be returned to income taxpayers as a rebate proportional to their tax payments.

Despite the shortcomings of the program it is, nonetheless, the best tax program any of us have seen in many years. And it's the first time we have seen the Legislature argue over the best way to send money back to the people. It's the kind of argument that only the people can win. And any time the people come away winners from a session of the Legislature, it's a step in the right direction!

## Ullman backs imports

Oregon Congressman Al Ullman said today he will seek prompt House action on the Meat Import Act of 1979. His announcement followed Ways and Means Committee approval of the Ullman bill on Thursday.

Ullman said he was delighted with the action of the Committee, which defeated several attempts to modify the bill first introduced by the 2nd District Congressman in March.

"As approved by the Committee, this legislation will be beneficial to consumers and producers alike," Ullman said. "It will stabilize prices by reversing a situation in which additional meat imports are allowed into the country when domestic cattle production is rising and prices are declining."

The bill would establish a formula under which imports above a 1.2 billion pound limit would be allowed when domestic supplies are very low and prices consequently high.

The formula would be a partial substitute for presidential discretionary authority to lift import quotas, which has frequently tended to discourage domestic production and reduce domestic supplies.

"This kind of change is absolutely essential to reducing the wide swings in domestic meat prices which have created a boom-and-bust cycle in the cattle industry. Stability is in everyone's best interest, and that's what this bill will help us achieve," Ullman said.

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