

The INDEPENDENT

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Opinion

More ballot measures

Continuing from the last issue, this will be further review of ballot measures on the November General Election.

MEASURE 98, CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT — This would prohibit using "public funds" to collect or help collect "political funds." Public funds are defined in such a broad sense that it includes public buildings, employee time, equipment and supplies, statements of support or opposition to a candidate, ballot measure or initiative petition. In an attempt to block fund raising by payroll deductions, including any portion of public employees' union dues that could be used to promote the interests of union members, it would probably block the use of public funds to produce even the basic voters pamphlet. The language is imprecise and is another of those measures that would probably end up in court—with the taxpayers picking up the cost.

Recommend a NO vote on Measure 98.

MEASURE 88, STATUTE, AND MEASURE 91, CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT — Both of these measures concern the amount of Federal income tax that would be deductible on the State income tax return.

Measure 88 would increase the deductible amount from a maximum of \$3000 to \$5000. The financial impact is estimated to reduce state revenues by from \$47 million to \$130 million per year, increasing with the growth in overall income tax revenue.

Measure 91 would retain no maximum amount and make all federal income taxes deductible on State returns. It is estimated that State revenues would be reduced by \$800 million to \$1 billion per year, with as much as two-thirds of that tax break going to corporations, which currently are unable to deduct federal taxes from state income tax liability.

The obvious concern about these tax reduction efforts is not knowing how the greatly reduced income would be allocated, for instance: Funds for education and law enforcement both derive from state income taxes, not from targeted taxes such as those that go to highways.

Another concern is that the tax break would be of absolutely no help to anyone who \$3000 per year, or less, in federal income taxes—which is more than half of all Oregonians—but would be a huge tax break for the wealthiest 10 percent.

These considerations are sufficiently disturbing that many wealthy individual taxpayers are publicly opposing both Measure 88 and Measure 91, as are many large corporations and Associated Oregon Industries. Their biggest concern is the negative impact to the state's educational system, particularly at a time when technology companies are begging for a more educated workforce.

Recommend a NO vote on Measures 88 and 91.

MEASURE 90, STATUTE — This measure would authorize allowing rates that pay a return to stockholders on utility plants that do not provide service to the ratepayers. In some ways, this is moot, since the PUC has already authorized a similar program for PGE's defunct Trojan nuclear plant. This is really a perversion of paying for the services you need and should not be instituted in law. Why should utility stockholders be guaranteed a loss-free status when utility ratepayers are not even guaranteed that the service they agree to pay for will be available?

Recommend a NO vote on Measure 90

MEASURE 93, CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT — This would require voter approval of most tax and fee increases and, additionally, if this measure is approved, those subsequent approvals would have to be by the same percentage. It also would require the repeal and refund of recent tax and fee increases unless another election is held and voters approve the increase.

What does this mean?!? It means that if the public library wants to start charging a late fee, they would first have to hold an election. The election would cost \$3,000-\$3,500. It means that an election would have to be held if the city needs to raise the fee for business licenses. It means that the athletic participation fee enacted this year by Vernonia School District would have to be refunded but could be reinstituted if the voters approve, after another election. This is just a sampling of how this measure could end up costing much more than it would save.

Recommend a NO vote on Measure 93.



Ike Says...

By Dale Webb, member, Izaak Walton League, Nehalem Valley Chapter

I recently discovered another hiking trail in the local area that is very unique. The Four County's trail leads to the only place in Oregon where it is possible to stand in four Counties at the same time. The trail is on Highway 26 just a few miles west of the Timber Road junction, where the highway turns into four lanes going uphill. There is a sign on the right and plenty of room to park on the shoulder. The trail is very obvious as it takes off down hill toward the north fork of Wolf Creek. Just before the trail dives off into the creek, turn hard left up the hill and follow the trail back toward the highway, almost back to your vehicle, before angling back into the woods. The trail is about a mile long and laid out by someone having a little fun. Your mind will start to question whether you are on the right trail as it meanders through the woods, up onto a power line right-of-way and right back into the woods. Near the end of the trail, it hooks back up the hill as if it is going to double right back on itself.

The reward of this hike is the granite marker that is inlaid into the ground designating the corners of Columbia, Washington, Clatsop and Tillamook counties. My hiking partner, Donna, took my picture as I have my hands and feet in each of the respective counties at one time. Another reward of this hike is the old growth timber growing at the beginning of this trail. The trees here measure five to six foot at the base and are probably 150-200 feet tall. It is absolutely amazing to stand at the base of one of these giants and stare straight up along the trunk towards the sky. There was a little wind the day of our hike and the trunks of some of these trees swayed ten feet or more at the top.

I will have to admit that, while having lived all of my life in this area, and a good share of that as a logger, it is a shame we don't have more of these patches of timber to walk in. I have walked in old growth forests in the Cascades and they are spectacular, but there is something about a coastal old growth Douglas Fir that sets them apart.

Please remember that it is hunting season now and wear bright colors such as red or orange while hiking in the woods for safety.

I have recently been asked by several people if we will be able to have a consumptive fishery for Cutthroat trout in our local streams again. There was a proposal to do just that in the recent angling regulations review conducted by ODF&W. Unfortunately, this proposal was al-

tered during the process (I guess this was legal) to exclude the North Oregon coastal streams. I called our district fish biologist, Keith Braun, one of the two biologists who originally proposed this regulation change, to inquire why the proposal was altered to exclude the North coast. The reason given was that not all of the North coast streams are in as good of shape as the Nehalem and there are still questions as to the overall health of Cutthroat in the Nehalem itself. When I questioned Braun more about why the South coast is still moving forward with the original proposal, he said the biologist in that area felt confident that the populations in his area could support this limited fishery. When I interjected that we have a robust population of Cutthroat in the upper Nehalem (people catching 50 fish per pole on opening weekend), he didn't argue, but interjected a new argument I had never heard before. Braun stated that it is theorized that there are populations of fish that move within the Nehalem's watershed, i.e. fish moving from the upper Nehalem down to tide water and then back upstream again. It is felt that these populations of fish may be at risk or have small populations. When I asked what data this is based on, the reply was that there is no data in the Nehalem. That, in itself, is a reason for concern. When I suggested that we conduct a fish tagging study in the upper Nehalem utilizing local fishermen that are already catching fish in the spring fishery, it was rebuffed as not having good scientific merit. I asked when the department was going to have the money and manpower to conduct a study to answer questions hamstringing a consumptive fishery in the Nehalem. I already knew the answer. Braun confirmed it, stating he doubted there would ever be any money available to do the necessary studies in light of the salmon issues that we face today.

Personally, I feel that protecting Cutthroat trout in the Nehalem system is unjustified. First, catches of Cutthroat trout in the upper Nehalem are at the same level as in the seventies and this indicates there is not a decline ongoing. Second, Cutthroat trout are a predator on Coho salmon, a listed threatened species in the Nehalem, and by protecting them, we may be harming the very fish we are trying to save. I am not suggesting that we need to eliminate Cutthroat trout, but instead, provide balance. Third, there is already a built in protection for Cutthroat trout that exists today, that did not in the seventies. Private forest lands are behind locked gates during this fishery and, most likely, provide a safe refuge for

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