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Franklin D. Roosevelt on Private Power

The first truth is that the liberty of a democracy is not safe if the people tolerate the growth of private power to a point where it becomes stronger than their democratic state itself. That, in its essence, is fascism – ownership of government by an individual, by a group, or by any other controlling private power.

— Franklin D. Roosevelt,
"Recommendations Relative to the Strengthening and Enforcement of Anti-trust Laws"

Letters

Urges support for Sheriff's tax levy

To the Editor:

In December of 2009, your Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) established a 21 member Law Enforcement Advisory Committee to take a hard look at law enforcement services in Columbia County. The charge from the BOCC was very broad and encouraged the citizen group to look at all the options and to come up with recommendations that would be considered by the BOCC. This citizen effort identified and researched over a dozen options and came up with two recommendations that were presented to the BOCC in April of 2010. Those recommendations are now the basic elements of

an issue placed on the ballot for all the citizens of the county to consider.

The results of that work now are on the ballot as Measure 5-210, for a decision by the citizens of the county. An affirmative vote will greatly enhance the safety of citizens within the county, and provide for the proper operation of the county jail. Taken together, the long term economic viability of the county will be enhanced. A safe community with the ability to lock up criminals is very important to proper livability and economic development.

Passage of Measure 5-210 will provide a stable funding source for county law enforcement and ensure to all, that Columbia County is a safe place to live and work. I would en-

courage every citizen to vote in the affirmative to help guarantee stable funding for the Columbia County Sheriff's Office. Help to ensure that the hard work of 21 local citizens becomes reality.

Thank you,

**Paul Koch
Gresham**

Policy on Letters

The INDEPENDENT will not publish letters with personal attacks on private citizens. Preference will be given to brief letters, 300 words or less.

All letters must be signed and include a verifiable address or phone number.

Salem Scene

By Representative Brad Witt
Oregon District 31



As you can imagine, I get letters on a daily basis asking me to support legislation on a number of issues, or conversely, to do whatever I can to see that some legislation dies a quiet death. Lately, a lot of letters are focused on the budget and what people think we should cut in order to balance the state's books. Nothing is done in a vacuum, however, and everything that we do has a profound consequence for someone. This week, I would like to give you just a brief overview of the budget as proposed by the Co-Chairs of Ways and Means, the committee charged with devising how the state should spend its money over the next two years.

First of all, I want to emphasize that these numbers are not cast in stone, although they are based on the best estimate of anticipated revenue as based on the March revenue forecast. Everything will solidify after the May 12th forecast. Right now, the agreed upon scenario for the 2011-13 General Fund & Lottery Funds Total Budget is \$14.380 billion, which reflects a \$310 million Ending Balance (reserves).

By far the largest budget is Education, at over 50% of general fund/lottery revenues, with Human Services, Public Safety and Other Programs splitting the rest of the pie.

Needless to say, when we think about cutting programs, everything helps, but some things help more than others. For instance, figuring out a better health care delivery system might save much more than cutting Oregon Project Independence, the cost-effective program that keeps seniors in their own homes, instead of sending them to costly nursing homes.

As the Sub-Committees of Ways and Means continue to work through remaining budgets, they will be guided by the constant reminder that money is scarce but people are important. Slashing programs without regard to the consequences will only create havoc and cause us to spend more in the long run.

Floor Action...

Last week, I carried HB 3215A on the floor of the House. This bill prohibits convicted felons from purchasing hunting licenses and tags in Oregon. Current law prohibits individuals from possessing firearms if they have been convicted of a felony, or found

guilty of a felony except for insanity. Unfortunately, the very same felons are today free to purchase gun-based hunting licenses and tags in Oregon. If these licenses or tags are used, it means that either the felons are using guns or someone else is using the tags and licenses, both of which are unlawful. The bill passed 41-15. The 15 who voted against the bill? I don't know what they were thinking...

Last Thursday, former Rainier Police Chief Ralph Painter was honored by the Oregon House as my colleague, Rep. Jeff Barker, and I led the passage of HB 3354, which renames the portion of US Highway 30 between St. Helens and Rainier as the "Chief Ralph Painter Memorial Highway".

As I told my colleagues, "If you were lucky enough to know Ralph Painter, you know that he was the guy who came to your house in the middle of the night to help repair your broken water pipe, or the guy who took your kids on a day-long fishing trip with his children, whom he dearly loved. We were fortunate to have Ralph Painter as our Police Chief and I know his family will be very grateful for this honor. This is a fitting honor that recognizes the incredible role Chief Painter played as our chief and as our friend." The bill passed unanimously and now moves on to the Senate where Senator Betsy Johnson, as chief co-sponsor, will carry the bill.

Bills of Interest...

- SB 846 Directs Dept. of Transportation to adopt standards for bicycle trailers designed for human passengers.
- SB 695 Creates unlawful practice of manufacturing, distributing, or offering for sale child's beverage container, container for infant formula or reusable bottle lined with Bisphenol A or replacement material that is carcinogenic or is reproductive toxicant.
- SB 945 Prohibits manufacturers or other specified persons from knowingly selling brake friction material or motor vehicles or trailers with brake friction material containing specific amounts of certain fibers or elements that are hazardous when released into state waterways.
- SB 538 Requires Dept. of Human Services to adopt rules requiring drug testing of adult applicants for and recipients of public assistance.
- HB 2020 Directs state agencies to report to Ways & Means ratio of agency employees to supervisory employees/managerial positions/ number of manager who do not supervise.
- HB 2229 Establishes Oregon Homeless Veterans Coalition in Dept. of Veterans Affairs.