The Board Takes Positions on Ballot Measures

During its last board meeting, the LWVOR board took the recommendations of the Action Committee and approved the following positions.

**Ballot Measure 94:** Support - The Oregon Elimination of Mandatory Judicial Retirement Age Amendment, would eliminate the requirement that judges retire at the age of 70. It would also authorize or require the retirement or of judges with a physical or mental disability or any other cause rendering judges incapable of performing their judicial duties. Action felt that the forced retirement age was age discrimination, against League positions.

**Ballot Measure 95:** Support - The Oregon Public University Diversification of Investments Amendment would amend Section 6 of Article XI of the Oregon Constitution to allow public state universities to invest in equities. This would allow universities to allow growth through investments other than patents. University Boards will have public meetings, so they meet our positions on being transparent, accountable.

**Ballot Measure 96:** Neutral - Amends Constitution, dedicates lottery funding for veterans’ support services. Because this is another carve-out of the lottery funds, and because it amends the constitution, the League has concerns. But, these monies are likely needed for veteran’s services.

**Ballot Measure 97:** Support - increases certain corporate taxes by establishing a 2.5 percent tax on corporate gross sales that exceed $25 million. Specifically, it would establish a minimum tax of $30,000 plus 2.5 percent of gross sales that exceed $25 million. LWVOR’s position that says, “A tax system that recognizes the individual’s responsibility for government services by providing for broad sharing of the tax burden.” Oregon has faced a consistent revenue shortage for the past 25 years. While Oregon’s economy has grown, voters have placed limits on the state’s ability to impose new taxes, which has caused inadequate funding of schools and public services. In addition, Oregon faces a budget shortfall of $1.35 billion in the upcoming budget period. That is a substantial gap, amounting to about 6 percent of the state budget. According to Oregon’s Legislative Revenue Office, the measure would raise more than $6 billion each budget biennium. This measure effectively replaces losses from Measure 5. Although this measure is somewhat regressive, since it is a statute, the legislature can always correct it later without the 3/5ths vote required from both houses for a tax increase. (Continued on page 2.)
Ballot Measure Positions
(Continued from page 1.)

We cannot ignore the needs for K-12 schools, human services, the elderly and public safety. Without this additional revenue, we will again see cuts to the services the public needs and wants.

Ballot Measure 98: Neutral – requires that the Oregon State Legislature fund dropout-prevention, career and college readiness programs in Oregon high schools. It would require that the legislature provide at least $800 per student initially and adjusted annually for inflation and population growth. LWVOR supports comprehensive K-12 funding, which is why we support M97, but if M97 does not pass, this measure will likely reduce funding for early childhood education, an area where LWVOR has increased our voice in support.

Ballot Measure 99: Neutral - creates an "Outdoor School Education Fund," sourced from state lottery proceeds, to support outdoor school programs. The outdoor school initiative seeks to designate about $22 million in state lottery funds for outdoor education for all fifth and sixth graders in Oregon. This outdoor education involves a stay at a camp for a few nights while learning about science. This is a worthy program but we cannot afford more carve-outs of Lottery Funds. We fully expect that the Legislature would provide this funding if M97 passes.

Ballot Measure 100: Neutral - This measure supports prohibiting the sale of products and parts of 12 types of endangered animals in Oregon: rhino, cheetah, tiger, sea turtle, lion, elephant, whale, shark, pangolin, jaguar, ray, and leopard. We have an LWVUS position on ecosystem protections and this measure would probably not cost Oregon (except ODFW is responsible for enforcing). However, we have no strong positions on this issue.

A New Year for LWVOR Program

Once the busy election season ends, two state studies will be available for local League consensus discussions with final responses due March 1. The Election Methods Update is entering its final editing phase and should be available in September or October. The Public Postsecondary Education study, currently being edited, will be ready a little later in the fall. The Hardrock Mining committee continues with research. Spring 2017 is LWVOR Convention time! If you have ideas for new studies, updates or informational projects be ready to share them during local League program planning sessions.
President's Column / Norman Turrill

We are entering the period of our biennial program that is the most meaningful to the Oregon League, the general election and the long session of the Legislature.

I predict that this will be a historic election with a larger turnout than any before and with a historic election of candidates. With the New Motor Voter bill that the League supported and with the League’s own voter registration efforts, Oregonians are registering to vote in much greater numbers. That together with a major presidential candidate inciting violence, asserting that our elections are rigged, and insulting women, disabled, gay and naturalized voters, the turnout in Oregon should be hu-u-u-ge.

With all these new voters, this makes our voter education work even more important. Since the LWVOR has been relatively successful in receiving grant funds and donations, the LWVOR will again pay for the printing of all state Voters’ Guides and contribute toward the expenses for debates and forums for statewide and congressional candidates. The work of local Leagues to distribute the Voters’ Guides and arrange for debates and forums should be even easier. Please see Becky Gladstone’s separate article on our Voters’ Guides, debates, forums, speaker’s bureau, Mock Election and other efforts for the general election. Join our Voter Service team and support our national League’s top priority GOTV campaign!

With Measure 97 on the fall ballot (which the LWVOR Board has endorsed), Oregon voters and the League have a historic opportunity to balance the damage done to state revenues by previous ballot measures. Because the legislature is required to have three-fifths votes in both houses to adopt any tax increase, a tax increase has been all but impossible, regardless of the crying needs of our schools, social programs and PERS. The fact that three other fall ballot measures are trying to carve-out and reserve funds for their special programs (which the LWVOR Board voted to remain neutral on), just emphasizes this point. Measure 97 is not perfect and is perhaps somewhat regressive, but since it is a statutory measure, the legislature can easily amend it with a simple majority vote.

This then points to the important work that the LWVOR Action Team will have when the Legislature starts its work in January. Besides the budget fall-out from Measure 97, there will be important proposals for climate change, affordable housing, campaign finance reform and the environment. Join the Action Team to have your own impact!

It is most gratifying to me to be able to lead the LWVOR through such important work. Your work now will multiply in its effects throughout the next two years.

Norman Turrill, n.turrill@lwvor.org
Great Schools, Great Communities Project

Robin Wisdom, Project Chair,
Great Schools, Great Communities will hold more forums in the fall of 2016. Representatives of the Oregon Center for Public Policy and the LWV of Oregon have met since late 2014 to hold forums for local Leagues and other organizations in their areas. Organizers are committed to solving the funding crisis in education in Oregon and want to involve Oregonians all around the state.

Because the state League and the state Action Committee recently came out in support of Ballot Measure 97, the corporate tax measure, the forum organizers will encourage support for that measure as well.

A new revenue stream is necessary to fight off the decline of education in our state and nation. Nationally, Oregon is far below average. Forum discussion also includes the current status of funding, the pitfalls, and the prospects for a better quality education for our children.

Check the Great Schools, Great Communities website for more information--http://www.greatoregonschools.org/. To schedule a forum, contact Robin Wisdom, r.wisdom@lwvor.org, 541-672-6982.

LWV Launches Massive Voter Mobilization Effort

I am writing to you on Women’s Equality Day, the 96th anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment, granting women the Right to VOTE! LWVUS is launching a “Massive Voter Mobilization Effort” to celebrate!

LWVUS WANTS YOU! Track your Leagues’ Voter Service outreach. Please ask for help, if need be, so your work will be tallied! The PEW Charitable Trusts 2014 Elections Performance Index* ranked Oregon #5 for Voter Registration, and #8 for Voter Turnout. We see unprecedented Voter registration this year. Our challenge is to inform and motivate voters, including our new ones, to VOTE! Our League performance should reflect our engaged electorate. Because we deserve no less, our local Leagues Voter Service Reps and LWVOR Technology Committee are working overtime. *http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/multimedia/data-visualizations/2014/elections-performance-index. LWVUS wants to know:

- **Voter Registration:** How many voters did we register? Aim for September 27th, our 5th annual LWVUS/National Voter Registration Day partnership.
- **Robocalls:** (Yes, Leagues’!) How many are we placing to GOTV (Get Out The Vote!)? We are looking into this, since LWVUS asked.
- **Voter Protection and Observation Teams:** Have you scheduled with your Elections Offices? Have you met with your County Clerks to discuss needs and concerns? My County Clerk placed a request for a nonpartisan League Observers’ Team in 2014—ask yours!
Voter Service (Continued from page 4)

VOTEResources

Ballot Measures We are again covering state Ballot Measures. One of seven, Measure 97, a corporate tax proposal, promises already to be the biggest battle and draw for out-of-state pro & con campaign funding. We ask researchers to condense materials, to make descriptions brief and accessible to John Q. Public. Special thanks this year go to:

- Researchers: Judy Ball, Clyde Fahlman, Shannon Flowers, Sally Hollemon, Jamie McLeod, Shirley Nelson, Margaret Noel, Chris Vogel, and chair Robin Wisdom.
- Editors: Diana Bodtke, Jane Berry Eddings, Sally Hollemon, chairs Deanie Anderson and Bea Epperson
- Oregon Elections Division: Janet Flowers, for supporting researchers with webpages and navigation guidance, including Explanatory and Fiscal Impact Statements.

Speakers’ Bureau We already have requests for speaking engagements. Our nonpartisan League speakers will be armed with pro & con statements, historical perspectives, official Explanatory and Fiscal impact statements, anticipated consequences of yes/no votes, and ongoing current events’ impact on our state measures, up to the election.

State Voters’ Guides LWVOR is again paying for, researching, compiling, formatting, printing and distributing (and posting) LWVOR Standard Voters’ Guides, in both English and Spanish. Orders are due September 15th, for delivery about two weeks before ballots drop, October 19th.

Election Events Local Leagues are planning 15 events so far, not including many Video Voters’ Guide events. All will be listed in our events calendar. State level debates include in Secretary of State in Bend September 26th, Governor in Eugene October 6th, and CD5 in Salem, date TBD.

Oregon Student Mock Elections Chair Anne Emmons is coordinating a vigorous enrollment review to reach out to all Oregon middle and high schools. We encourage schools and local Leagues to form strong bonds as we welcome 16 year old League members after our LWVUS Convention vote this summer. Schools should be aware of our Speakers’ Bureau and Voter Registration support. Please reach out to schools to provide pages for your debates. We can all help each other!

We were invited to review curriculum standards at the Oregon Department of Education Social Sciences Summit from the perspective of our Mock Elections Civics Curriculum. We presented workshops to National of Student Councils and Post-Secondary School Principals Conventions.
Voter Service (Continued from page 5)

VOTEResources & Vote411* Thanks to Tech Chair Mary Sinclair, Becky Gladstone, and staff, Sarah Andrews:

- “Election Buzz:” Almost daily, Oregon specific updates will be posted here -- events, campaign news, deadline reminders, etc.
- Oregon election lists: Candidates and ballot measures are searchable by their names, the office they’re filed to run for, and by their county. Ballot measures are listed by county, by measure number, and by topics. This includes federal, state, county, city, and special district races.
- Events: Voter Service Chairs are getting Voter Service News emails to help with publicity. Please share press, audio and video links because these will be linked via our Google partnership.
- Easy County Reference Sheet: An all in one easy access, candidates and ballot measures by County.
- All Oregon Election Information: Oregon’s candidate filing deadline is August 30th. We allow our various elections officials processing time, then we e-invite candidates to add information to our League sites and remind them. We will process, post, print, ship and announce!

*http://lwwor.org/home/voteresources/

TRY They Represent You We hope to help streamline elections processing and improve networking between Oregon government agencies. The League was invited to present information on our project to a Geospatial Data Sharing work group this summer. Stay tuned.

Mock Election 2016

In July 2016 we presented “Mock Elections at Your School”, for the National Association of Student Councils and the National Association of Secondary School Principals joint national conferences. We are translating our Civic ED curriculum for citizenship classes.

Mock Election 2016 is ready to go. We have identified schools across the state that did not participate in our 2014 mock election and sent them copies of our ME brochure and an invitation to participate in the 2016 mock election.

By teacher request, our Mock Election now includes choices! Teachers can choose what best fits their classes. They can customize ballots, add your school question, opt for online voting, and be counted in national tallying.

Members are encouraged to contact schools in their neighborhoods to promote participation in the 2016 LWVOR Mock Election. By clicking on the Civics Ed link on LWVOR.org you will find a printable version of our new Mock Election Brochure, our civics education curriculum along with additional classroom resources, and be able to register to participate in the 2016 presidential mock election.
Citizens’ Review Statement

This Citizens’ Statement, authorized by the 2011 State Legislature, was developed by an independent panel of 20 Oregon voters overseen by the Citizens’ Initiative Review Commission. The panelists were randomly selected from registered voters in Oregon and balanced to fairly reflect the state’s electorate based on location of residence, party registration, age, gender, education, race and ethnicity, and likelihood of voting. Over a period of four days, the panel heard from initiative proponents, opponents, and independent experts. The panelists deliberated about the measure and produced this statement. This statement has not been edited, altered, or approved by the Secretary of State.

The opinions expressed in this statement are those of the members of a citizen panel and were developed through the citizens’ review process. They are NOT official opinions or positions endorsed by the State of Oregon or any government agency. A citizen panel is not a judge of the constitutionality or legality of any ballot measure, and any statements about such matters are not binding in a court of law.

Key Findings

These findings were ranked by citizen panelists, starting with the most important for voters to know.

- Measure 97 is an amendment to an existing law (ORS 317.090), that would revise the minimum corporate income tax for C- corporations making over $25 million in Oregon sales.
- The revenue generated by Measure 97 can be utilized according to the priorities identified by the Oregon legislature.
- If passed, the estimated 6 billion dollars generated would represent a 25% increase in overall state revenue biennially.
- Approximately 80% of the state budget is already in education & health care, so there is a strong propensity for money to go to those areas if M97 passes.
- M97 raises the corporate minimum tax on sales above $25 million on large and/or out-of-state C corporations, affecting less than 1% of businesses in Oregon.
- Our state’s primary revenue is generated from income tax, which can be volatile. If passed, this could provide more economic stability.
- M97 taxes sales, not profits. It would require C corporations to pay 2.5% on sales over $25 million, even when they make no profit or lose money. That could hurt C corporations that have slim margins; like grocery stores, medical clinics and some farms.
- If a business chooses to leave Oregon and continues to do business in the state they will still be subject to the corporate tax.
- According to Roberta Mann, a law professor at the University of Oregon, if this measure passes, it is likely that 75% of the tax burden would be borne by shareholders & investors rather than being reflected in increased pricing for goods & services.
Statement in Support of the Measure
We, 11 members of the Citizens’ Initiative Review, support Measure 97 for the following reasons:

- Measure 97 would raise $3 billion annually, allowing for major investments in education, healthcare, and senior services. This revenue could improve Oregon’s low graduation rates, make healthcare more accessible, and provide 20,000 more seniors with in-home care.
- Oregon schools & critical services have been underfunded for decades. According to accounting firm Ernst & Young, Oregon ranks last (50th) with the lowest rate of corporate taxation in the country. To increase the ranking to 49th, the state would need to raise an additional $1.5 billion a year in corporate tax revenue.
- Oregon state expenditures are growing faster than tax revenue, according to Mark McMullen, State Economist, and Ken Rocco, Oregon Legislative Fiscal Officer.
- Each corporation that would be subject to the taxes under Measure 97 would have the opportunity to write off their state taxes against their federal tax.
- Without new revenue sources, Oregon faces an estimated $750 million a year of new budget cuts. Measure 97 could raise $3 billion a year to fund education, healthcare, and senior services, as determined by the legislature.

We are currently in a crisis of underfunded public education, healthcare, and senior services. The passage of Measure 97 would quickly fix this. The measure would provide a more stable economic base for all Oregonians. We believe that fairness, responsibility, and accountability are the core values at stake in this matter.

Disclaimer: This vote indicates that if this microcosm of people, who are reflective of the demographics of Oregon, were to vote on this measure today, this is how they would vote.

Statement in Opposition to the Measure
We, 9 members of the Citizens’ Initiative Review, are opposed to Measure 97 for the following reasons:

- A nonpartisan study by the Legislative Revenue Office says M97’s tax could increase costs consumers pay for essential goods and services, costing a typical family $600 more per year.
- The Legislative Revenue Office report stated that if M97 passes it could result in a 1% lack of creation of jobs.
- The estimated overall impact of M97 is based on an assumption that consumers would receive 50% of the burden, however the actual burden on consumers cannot be determined.
- A nonpartisan Legislative Revenue Office study shows 97’s tax is regressive. It could increase consumer costs for food, medicine, clothing, housing, utilities and other essential goods and services. The passage of M97 would create a regressive tax. A regressive tax takes a larger percentage of income from low income earners creating an unnecessary burden on many Oregon families. One of the major risks of passing M97 is significant job loss. Another result of passing M97 could be a large increase in costs to corporations resulting in increased costs to consumers. This could lead to decreased economic stability and bring financial harm to all Oregonians. Efficiency, transparency, and fairness are the core values at stake in this matter.

(9 of 20 panelists took this position)
The League of Women Voters of Oregon File Amicus Brief

Alice Bartelt, Action Chair

On September 12, 2016, the League of Women Voters of Oregon (LWVOR) joined the League of Women Voters United States (LWVUS) to file an amicus (Friend of the Court) brief in the U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon. The Leagues support the 21 young people from across the United States who have filed a landmark constitutional climate change lawsuit against the federal government, via Our Children’s Trust, an organization based in Eugene, Oregon. The lawsuit asserts that, in causing climate change, the federal government has violated the youngest generation’s constitutional rights to life, liberty, property, as well as failed to protect essential public trust resources.

The Leagues’ amicus brief details the organizations’ judicial involvement, which is particularly necessary to address the dangers of climate change in the face of congressional, executive and agency inaction and political gridlock. The court is being called upon, as they have always been in public trust cases—not to exercise direct management over the rest of the trust, but to ensure that the political branches fulfill their trust obligation to avoid destruction or irreparable harm to an asset that must be sustained for generations of citizens to come.

This brief is a follow up to one of the three resolutions passed at the LWVUS convention that addressed these issues. The resolution was that the LWVUS consider signing onto an amicus brief in the case that Our Children’s Trust is bringing against the federal government to make sure that their rights are protected. A special thank you goes to Claudia Keith, a LWVOR member who took the lead in getting this done.

Members Needed to Serve on Member Agreement Committees

Next spring, two studies will have concluded with local leagues having answered consensus questions about each of them. The next step is for a committee to be formed to write positions that LWVOR will take in regard to those studies. Our policy states: the Board appoints a member agreement committee consisting of the study chair, one other study committee member, the Action Chair, one other Board member, and two off-Board members to analyze the responses and write a position statement. The President is an ex-officio member of the committee. The committee should include members from large and small Leagues, if possible. Please consider joining one of these committees. One will consider the Election Methods study and one will consider the Post-Secondary Education study. If you would be willing to serve on one of these groups, please contact Alice Bartelt, a.bartelt@lwvor.org.

Request for Bylaws Proposals

During the convention to be held next May, bylaws amendments may be considered. If anyone has any ideas for such amendments, please contact Alice Bartelt, Bylaws Committee Chair.
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