



COMMON SENSE FOR OREGON

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What You Need To Know Before You Vote on Measures 66 & 67



Pictured above: Ross Day (left), and Paulette Pyle (right), announces the

final signature count at the tax petition turn in rally Sept. 25th, 2009.

This week Oregonians all across the state will be receiving their special election ballots to vote on Measures 66 & 67. These new permanent taxes, the highest tax increase in Oregon's history, will adversely affect our economy at a time when Oregon's unemployment rate is second highest in the nation. It is not common sense to raise taxes on small businesses in a recession. The state must learn to balance their budget. Common Sense For Oregon urges you to vote no on Measures 66 & 67.

In this newsletter:

- A word from our Executive Director, Ross Day.
- A look into Oregon's bloated government.
- How you can get involved!

State Report Reveals \$3.6 Billion in Reserve Funds

By Ross Day, Executive Director and General Counsel

Just for the record, Common Sense For Oregon has come out in **opposition** to Ballot Measures 66 and 67, which will be voted on by the people of Oregon on January 26th, 2010. In the past,



Survey

Do you think Oregon's initiative process is in need of reform?

- Yes
- No

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Common Sense For Oregon has highlighted instances of government waste and abuse. Given the examples of waste and abuse that Common Sense has brought to the public's attention, it is difficult to imagine why the voters of Oregon would want to give the government any more money to waste.

According to the questionably accurate explanatory statements in the Voters' Pamphlet, Measures 66 and 67 will raise approximately \$727 million dollars over the next two years, in order to fill a hole in the current fiscal year budget – a hole created by the politicians in Salem. It is important to note that while the hole in the budget is temporary, the tax increases are permanent. From a philosophical standpoint, these tax increases simply go to far.

And based on the state of Oregon's Comprehensive Audit and Financial Report (CAFR), these two tax increases are unnecessary. The CAFR is an audit of the state's financial condition conducted every year. The report for 2009 shows that the state of Oregon has \$3,657,608,000 in unreserved funds (as of December 30, 2009).

Because these funds are "unreserved", the funds can be used how the state of Oregon sees fit. Why not simply use these funds to fill the budget hole?

There are two reasons. Not surprising, both reasons are extremely political.

First, the 2009 legislature was bent on raising taxes on businesses come hell-or-high-water. Businesses are the sworn enemy of the party in power at the state capitol, and anything the majority party could do to stick it to the "other side" probably well-received by majority party legislators and the governor.

Second, a state agency's ending fund balance is protected by the agency like a mama bear protects its cub. Agencies use these ending fund balances as a "slush fund" to pay for the agency's pet projects. If the legislature takes some (or all) of an agency's ending fund balance, the agency loses a considerable amount of power.

Not surprisingly, the CAFR released on December 30th, 2009 has not received much (if any) attention in the media, which is why this column may be the first time you have ever heard (or read) this information. Please feel free to pass this information along to your family and friends so that they can make an informed decision on these tax measures!



Oregon Has the Highest State Government Spending in the Region

By Dan Lucas

According to data from the National Association of State Budget Officers and the federal government, Oregon has the highest state government spending in the region. Oregon's state spending is 20% higher than Idaho's, 25% higher than California's, 30% higher than Washington's and 20% higher than Utah's – based on total state government expenditures as a percentage of GSP.

Oregon also has the highest per capita state government spending in the region. Oregon spends an average of \$6,000 per person a year; \$700 per person more than California, \$1,200 more than

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Washington, \$1,400 more than Utah and \$2,100 more than Idaho. Oregon's state government spends \$1,100 per person more than the national average.

A look at Measures 66 & 67 can help put Oregon's high level of state government spending into perspective. If voters reject these two measures with NO votes, then it would roll back \$733 million of the \$4.8 billion increase from the current \$55.9 billion budget. If Oregon were to bring its spending in line with Washington's state spending, then it would roll back the entire \$4.8 billion increase PLUS it would cut an additional \$12.1 billion from the Oregon budget! This massive \$16.9 billion cut, by the way, would reduce Oregon spending back to about what it was a little over 2 years ago, in the 2005-2007 budget! (*\$40.8 billion*)

STATE	Total State Expenditures (in millions), SFY2008	Total Gross State Product (GSP)	State Govt Spending as % of GSP	Total State Expenditures per Capita, SFY2008
		(millions of current dollars)		
2008				
Oregon	\$22,644	\$161,573	14.00%	\$6,000
California	\$194,276	\$1,846,757	10.50%	\$5,300
Washington	\$31,732	\$322,778	9.80%	\$4,800
Idaho	\$5,930	\$52,747	11.20%	\$3,900
Utah	\$12,420	\$109,777	11.30%	\$4,600
United States	\$1,502,492	\$14,165,565	10.60%	\$4,900

**Dan Lucas has worked in the information technology field for 27 years and also served as a signal intelligence analyst in Berlin, Germany during the Cold War. He has been a guest contributor for Cascade Policy Institute and Oregon Catalyst. Views expressed are the author's own.*

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Get Out The Vote!

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