



Advocacy Alert

OREGON FOOD BANK
OREGON HUNGER RELIEF TASK FORCE

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take five

(actions that take five minutes or less)

Action:

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon has compiled a guide to Oregon ballot measures and candidates for the Nov. 7 statewide general election.

Visit www.emoregon.org to download a PDF copy or to order multiple copies for your membership, or call 503-221-1054.

Message:

With the November election only weeks away, it is important for advocates to talk to friends and family about the ballot measures that will impact Oregonians who are hungry and food insecure. Share what you have learned about the measures and encourage them to sign up for the *Advocacy Alert* at www.oregonfoodbank.org. Click on "ADVOCATE" then "Advocacy Alert" or call 503-282-0555 Ext. 246.

Legislative Yellow Pages

State Legislative Information
1-800-332-2313 (outside Salem)
(503) 986-1000 (in Salem)
www.leg.state.or.us/citizenguide

Federal Legislative Contacts
Rep. Wu (District 1)
(503) 326-2901
Rep. Walden (District 2)
(541) 776-4646
Rep. Blumenauer (District 3)
(503) 231-2300
Rep. DeFazio (District 4)
(541) 465-6732
Rep. Hooley (District 5)
(503) 588-9100
Senator Smith
(503) 326-3386
Senator Wyden
(503) 326-7525

Important upcoming ballot measures

In September's *Advocacy Alert* we discussed the negative impacts of Measure 48 (to see the Alert, go to:

www.oregonfoodbank.org and click on "Advocate"). The November ballot will contain another measure that could impact Oregon's ability to fund education, public safety and health care.

MEASURE 41 will change how state income taxes are calculated. Currently, Oregon taxpayers may take a personal exemption tax credit (\$154 for 2005) for each exemption allowed under federal law. Under Measure 41, taxpayers would have the option of taking a tax deduction equal to the amount deducted on their federal taxes. State tax credits reduce the amount of taxes owed by the filer, dollar for dollar. This means a sharp reduction in the amount of revenue available to the state of Oregon to fund vital services.

The impact of Measure 41 on state revenue would be greater each successive year because the federal deduction is indexed for inflation. Measure 41 could require a retroactive cut of up to \$151 million from the current budget cycle; in budget year 2007-2009, the cuts would be almost \$835 million.

Measure 41 would change state statute, not the state constitution. Modifying the impacts of this measure through repealing the bill, delaying implementation, or decreasing the amount of the allowable tax deduction would require a vote of support from three-fourths of both the Oregon House and Senate.

Supporters of the measure say that four out of five taxpayers would pay lower taxes. The average Oregonian would pay \$134 less each year. However, the results will not be similar for all

populations; for instance, seven out of ten seniors will pay only \$31 less.

Opponents of the bill point out that the intended reduction in tax liability would be inconsistent because each taxpayer would have the choice of using the federal deduction. Many seniors and people in crisis could end up paying higher taxes than necessary. Opponents are also concerned that each year revenue for public services would be cut by about 6.5% of total expected revenue and that Oregonians would pay higher federal income taxes (because their state tax deduction on their federal tax returns would be less). The personal "kicker" would also be reduced.

Oregon Food Bank recommends a NO vote on Measure 41. Cuts to education, public safety and health care are not worth the savings for a portion of taxpayers.

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2005 Oregon Food Stamp Participation report

Oregon has become a national model for increased food stamp participation. As a result, fewer people are hungry and over 450 million food stamp dollars each year have been generated for Oregon communities. How many people use food stamps in your area? How can you help? Find out in the new *2005 Oregon Food Stamp Participation report: Supporting Healthy Communities*. For copies please visit www.oregonhunger.org or contact Shauna Petchel at OHRTF, 503-595-6062.

Important upcoming ballot measures (continued from page 1)

MEASURE 44 is another important measure on the ballot this November. It would allow any Oregon resident without current drug prescription coverage to participate in the Oregon Prescription Drug Program. This program was created by the 2003 Legislature to allow state agencies, local governments, school districts and low-income seniors to combine efforts to negotiate lower prices for prescriptions. Measure 44 will make prescription drugs available to participants at the lowest possible cost through negotiated price discounts.

Efforts to expand the Oregon Drug Prescription



Program during the 2005 Legislature were not successful due to opposition from the pharmaceutical industry. A change included in Measure 44 will restrict participation to individuals and will not include private employers. This change has garnered less opposition from the pharmaceutical industry.

The current Drug Prescription Program is limited to Oregon residents who are: 1) at least 54 years old, 2) earn less than 185% of the federal poverty level (currently \$18,130 per individual) and, 3) have not had prescription drug coverage for six months preceding application to the program.

Measure 44 would expand the Oregon Prescription

Drug Program by removing current eligibility requirements so that all Oregonians without prescription drug coverage may participate, regardless of age or income. This will expand the program to an estimated one million additional Oregonians who do not have drug coverage. Participation is voluntary and Medicare Part D prescription plan enrollees would be eligible to join.

Measure 44 will have no direct financial effect on state and local expenditures or revenues. Savings for program participants would increase as enrollment expands by bringing more people into the purchasing pool and increasing the

leverage for discounts. The current program has produced savings of about \$26 per prescription, on average, over the past year.

Oregon Food Bank recommends a YES vote on Measure 44. This measure will help a large number of Oregonians get the drug coverage they need and will not have a negative impact on Oregon revenue. It's a win-win for all involved.

Recommendations:

Vote No on Measure 41

Vote Yes on Measure 44

Vote No on Measure 48



The Advocacy Alert is published jointly by Oregon Food Bank (OFB) and the Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force (OHRTF).

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FAREWELL –
Long-time hunger and child nutrition advocate, Holly Wilkalis, has left the Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force for a job in her other area of expertise: Urban Planning. Holly is now staff for Host Development, helping to develop affordable housing, an issue closely related to her hunger work. We will miss Holly but she sure knows how to go. The week before she left, she was well-quoted in the Oregonian and received numerous kudos for her great new summer food website at the Task Force. We wish her the best.

WELCOME –
Please welcome former FOOD for Lane County Assistant Director, Jessica Chanay who has joined the Oregon Hunger Relief Task Force. Jessica will help coordinate programs and support the development of the newly formed nonprofit, Partners for a Hunger-Free Oregon. She brings a wealth of experience in anti-hunger advocacy, food bank management, food policy council stewardship and strong leadership. Often referred to as a rising star in the Oregon Food Bank Network, Jessica was awarded the Ron Cease Award for regional food bank staff excellence in 2005.