

# **Guide to the Ballot Measures**

## **League of Women Voters of Coos County**

### **Measure 115: Impeachment of Elected State Executives**

#### **What It Is**

This measure, a constitutional amendment, would authorize impeachment of statewide elected officials by the Oregon Legislature after a vote of two-thirds of the members of each house. It also establishes procedures for impeachment. The positions subject to the amendment would be Oregon Governor, Oregon Secretary of State, State Treasurer, State Attorney General, and Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor and Industries.

#### **Background**

Currently, Oregon is the only state in the nation that does not allow the Legislature to impeach the Governor. Oregon voters today have the power to organize a recall election provided the official has held office for at least 6 months.

#### **Supporters Say**

The current citizen-initiated process is onerous and the 6-month requirement is problematic. Without an impeachment process available to the Legislature, elected officials may resist leaving office after committing an offense.

#### **Opponents Say**

There is no organized opposition to this measure. When the Legislature failed to vote on similar measures in the past, senators contended that the measure was unnecessary because the existing process was adequate. Political Science Professor Jim Moore of Pacific University has noted that an impeachment process in the Legislature could become partisan.

### **Measure 116: State Compensation Commission**

#### **What It Is**

Measure 116 was referred to the voters by the Legislature. It would amend the constitution to establish an independent Public Service Compensation Commission to determine salaries for specified officials, eliminating the Legislature's power to set those salaries.

If created, the Commission would have the authority to determine salaries for the following positions: Oregon Governor, Oregon Secretary of State, State Treasurer, State Attorney General, Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor and Industries, state Supreme Court justices, Appeals Court judges, Circuit Court judges, state senators, state representatives, and county District Attorneys. No officers or employees of the state of Oregon, lobbyists, or immediate family members of such people would be allowed to serve on the Commission.

#### **Background**

Oregon law requires each county to appoint a compensation board to recommend salaries for various officials, but there is currently no requirement for the state to do the same.

There have been similar commissions in the past, but they disappeared after their funding was cut. The previous Public Officials Compensation Commission had only the power to recommend salaries, not to determine them. In 2022 a study showed that 21 states have compensation commissions. The salaries for Oregon statewide officials at this time are among the lowest in the country.

### **Supporters Say**

Oregon needs salary decisions that are independent of political pressure; the measure would remove decision-making authority from those who benefit from the decisions. Our elected officials should receive salaries that reflect the responsibilities of their jobs.

### **Opponents Say**

There is no organized opposition to the measure.

## **Measure 117: Statewide Ranked-Choice Voting**

### **What It Is**

The Oregon Legislature referred this measure to the ballot, asking the state's voters to decide whether we should change our voting method from the current "pick one" method to ranked-choice voting, in which candidates mark their choices for public office by order of preference.

If Measure 117 passes, ranked-choice voting would apply to candidates for U.S. President and Vice-President, U.S. Senators and Representatives, Oregon Governor, Oregon Secretary of State, State Treasurer, State Attorney General, and Commissioner of the Bureau of Labor and Industries—but not to candidates for the state Legislature. Local jurisdictions would have the option of adopting ranked-choice voting for their contests. It would take effect beginning in 2028.

### **Background**

Currently, a candidate wins an election if they get the most votes—50% + 1 if there are only two candidates, but if there are more than two, a candidate can win election with a much smaller percentage. Ranked-choice voting (RCV) allows for an "instant runoff," ensuring that in the end, the winning candidate has received at least 50% of the vote.

With RCV, voters are asked on their ballots to vote for several candidates, indicating which one is their favorite, which comes next, etc. If no candidate gets a clear majority of votes when the first-place choices are tallied, then the candidate with the fewest votes is dropped and voters who voted for that candidate have their second-ranked choices counted. This winnowing process continues until (a) one candidate gets a majority of the votes or (b) only two candidates are left, so that only one can get the majority.

### **Supporters Say**

Voters get the chance to vote for the candidate best aligned with their views, while still being able to show support for a less-perfect candidate they believe has a better chance of winning. More than 50 jurisdictions already use RCV, and in those places campaigns tend to be more civil because candidates benefit from appealing to a wider range of voters. Ranking the candidates ensures that voters' voices will be heard even if their first choice does not win; under the current system, if your candidate loses, your vote is erased.

## **Opponents Say**

The process will be confusing for voters, who will be left with questions about what they should put on their ballots and about how the votes are counted and how candidates are eliminated from contention. Candidates from the far right and far left may be overshadowed by middle-of-the-road candidates, disappointing the extremes of both parties. The process of counting and auditing ballots would become more complex and harder to report. RCV may result in more than one candidate from one party running against a single candidate from a different party, splitting the vote and giving an advantage to the single candidate.

## **Measure 118: Oregon Rebate**

### **What It Is**

This measure is a statutory amendment placed on the ballot after an initiative petition that received approximately 122,276 valid signatures. The chief petitioner is Antonio Gisbert. The measure would create the Oregon Rebate program, to be partially funded by a new corporate minimum tax equal to 3% of corporate sales above \$25 million annually. Individuals who lose federal assistance benefits because the rebate increases their income would be held harmless with additional payments, which would come from the rebate revenue.

### **Financial Impact**

According to the Legislative Revenue Office, following the initial phase-in, total biennial costs of the program would exceed the additional income it would bring in. The state would be required to replace any reduced federal benefits received by rebate recipients out of the general fund. Because Oregon has a relatively large population of low-income residents, the cost for the state to replace their lost benefits is estimated to start at \$12 million and increase to \$207 million by the end of the decade, depending on a variety of factors such as whether corporations pass on the cost of the tax to consumers or they cease to operate in the state.

### **Supporters Say**

Struggling families would receive rebate funds estimated to average about \$1,600 per year. Studies show that recipients of such funds tend to increase expenditures on necessities such as food and doctor visits; they work a few hours less per week but remain in the workforce. Corporations with sales of \$25 million or more would be asked to pay their fair share.

### **Opponents Say**

The proposed tax is on sales, not profits, which would make it hard for low-margin businesses like grocery stores to remain profitable. The new tax might discourage companies from moving to Oregon and encourage current employers to leave. Government officials of both major parties say the rebate program would place an enormous strain on state resources, leading to deep cuts to front-line services such as public safety and health care. Nonpartisan research indicates that Measure 118 would increase prices for consumer goods and slow Oregon's job growth.

## **Measure 119: Cannabis Industry Unionization Rules**

### **What It Is**

This measure is a statutory amendment placed on the ballot via an initiative petition that earned about 120,503 valid signatures. The chief petitioners are Dan Clay, Madison Walters, and Fiona Yau-Luu.

Under Measure 119, cannabis retailers and cannabis license holders would be required to be party to a labor peace agreement, which would compel them to remain neutral when labor organizations communicate with employees about collective bargaining rights. Failure to comply could result in licensure and certification penalties. If the employers terminate the agreement, they would be required to submit a new peace agreement within 30 days or face a fine or possible license suspension.

### **Background**

An estimated 7,671 people work in the Oregon cannabis industry. Because the cannabis industry is classified as an illegal industry at the federal level, many employers are treating cannabis workers seeking to exercise unionization rights as having an ambiguous status with respect to the National Labor Relations Board. The Board may regard them as agricultural workers, who do not have the same unionization rights as most employees in other industries.

### **Supporters Say**

The measure would close the loophole that currently exists by virtue of the cannabis industry's federal status. Workers should be free to organize and collectively bargain for better working conditions, including addressing safety concerns. Five other states currently have similar requirements for licensed cannabis businesses.

### **Opponents Say**

Under the National Labor Relations Act, states may not require private employers to enter into labor peace agreements unless the state is acting as a market participant by being either a party to a contract or purchasing the company's goods. By requiring cannabis employers to remain neutral, the measure would force them to remain silent about concerns they have about unions.