

Public Policy Update October 2020

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1. **VOTE! And brief descriptions of the state ballot measures**

Ballot Measure 107: Campaign Finance Limits, a Constitutional Amendment

This Ballot Measure doesn't set campaign contribution or expenditure limits, but authorizes the state legislature and local governments to enact laws and ordinance that can. Right now, Oregon campaign finance laws allow unlimited contributions to candidates and ballot measures, and Oregon is only one of five states with no limits on campaign contributions. The Measure also authorizes the state legislature and local governments to require disclosure of election contributions and expenditures, and provide that political advertisements identify the people or entities that paid for them.

Ballot Measure 108: Taxes on Tobacco and Nicotine-containing goods

Cigarette taxes will increase from \$1.33 to \$3.33 per pack, the cigar tax from \$.50 to \$1 each, and a snuff container, to a minimum \$2.14. All other non-taxed nicotine-containing goods, such as e-cigarettes and vaping products, will be taxed at 65% of wholesale. All the monies generated from these taxes will go to the Oregon Health Authority to help those who receive medial assistance, including mental health services, but 10% will go to OHA for distribution to tribal, cultural and community-specific health providers and programs. The intended result of the measure is to discourage tobacco/nicotine use and raise revenue.

Ballot Measure 109: Oregon Psilocybin Services

Psilocybin is a hallucinogenic chemical obtained from certain types of fresh and dried mushrooms. Under this measure the use of psilocybin is allowed only when administered in supervised, licensed facilities by licensed psilocybin service facilitators to persons 21 or older. No private or non-supervised public use is authorized. Before this practice can take place, the Oregon Health Authority will establish an Oregon Psilocybin Advisory Board

which over a two-year development period will study and report back to OHA on (a) the safety and efficacy of using psilocybin to treat mental health conditions,(b) the requirements, specifications, and guidelines for providing psilocybin services to clients, (c) required public health and safety standards, industry best practices, education and training. During the two-year development period, existing law regarding the manufacture, delivery and possession of psilocybin will not be affected by the measure. The measure also establishes a 15% point of sale tax on retail sales of psilocybin which will then be used as a source of funding for administering the program.

Ballot Measure 110: Drug Possession Offenses Decriminalized and Drug Addiction Treatment

This measure will decriminalize possession of illegal, controlled substances in Oregon, but the manufacture or sale will remain illegal. Instead of facing potential jail time and/or significant fines, persons possessing Schedule I through IV federally controlled substances will be committing a Class E violation which will result in a \$100 fine and/or completion of a health assessment at an addiction recovery center. This measure also creates a “Drug Treatment and Recovery Services Fund” financed by legislative appropriations and Oregon Marijuana Account allocations. An advisory council is created which will oversee and approve grants from the Fund which will be distributed to existing agencies or coordinated care organizations, which will in turn use them to create addiction recovery centers. The centers must provide immediate medical or other treatment 24 hours a day, health assessments, intervention plans, case management services, and peer support and outreach. Because part of the revenue for this Fund will come from the fund generated by taxes on the sale of marijuana, those who are currently receiving marijuana fund proceeds may receive less. These entities include the state school fund, the Oregon Healthy Authority, local governments, and state police, mental health / alcoholism / drug services programs.

2. AAUW of OR Series on “Together on the Path to Anti-Racism”

By popular demand — AAUW of OR will be presenting a continuing Zoom series about anti-racism. We kicked off the process of embarking on our collective and individual journeys at the Summer Skills Camp this last summer., but as is inherently the nature of journeys, we have more traveling to do. So, please join us as we travel “*Together on the Path to Anti-Racism.*”



Our journey’s next stop will be a Zoom presentation [Zoom info TBA] about “*What Needs to Change*” on Wednesday, October 28 at 7:00 p.m. Our speaker will be Dr. Markisha Smith, EdD, Director of the Portland Office of Equity and Human Rights. To give you more information about her, Dr. Smith previously served as Director for the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion at the Oregon Department of Education. Her work is specifically focused on best practices in equity, diversity, and inclusion, culturally responsive

practices and closing opportunity/access/belief gaps for historically and currently marginalized groups across the state. Markisha's previous experience also includes working as the Director of Undergraduate Teacher Education at Warner Pacific College, as an Assistant Professor at Western Oregon University and Northern Michigan University, and as a high school English teacher in Houston, Texas for nine years. She is a proud mother of two beautiful children, Cadence and Bryson.

We haven't set a date for November, but we are hoping to provide a forum for all our branches to present and talk about what they are doing, the books they are reading, discussion groups, speakers, etc. about the topic of anti-racism. Be thinking about what contribution your branch will be making. AND please let me know by October 30th what you have or what you are planning to do about anti-racism so we can include your branch in our presentation. We may need to focus on one or two branches, but we also hope to provide a resource list to the entire membership.

3. Gossip regarding legislative Sessions

In sum - at virtually every meeting of political coalitions and other persons keenly interested in what happens at the state legislature, we find ourselves speculating about when and how long the state legislature will be in session. There still seems to be some interest in another Special Session, but it's unclear whether it will be in November or December. It's also unclear about what the devastating impact of forest fires in Oregon will have to this timetable - not to mention how to help those communities which were affected. Although more related to COVID, there is also some discussion about the Regular 2021 Session beginning at a time other than the usual February date. April is seen as a possibility.

In terms of what legally can be done regarding the holding of legislative sessions, Article IV, Section 10 of the Oregon Constitution provides that sessions in odd numbered years "may not exceed" 160 calendar days and even-numbered years "may not exceed" 35 days. This doesn't exactly prescribe the date a session must begin or whether it can be of shorter length. Of course, it also leaves the question open as to whether the 160 days must be 160 consecutive days.

So, now you are as "in the know" as anyone other than Senate and House leadership is, and even then, they may not know either!

Conclusion

On that elucidating point, it looks as if this Update will be ending. I will reiterate — VOTE!!! And don't forget to send me the info on your branch's activities regarding anti-racism.