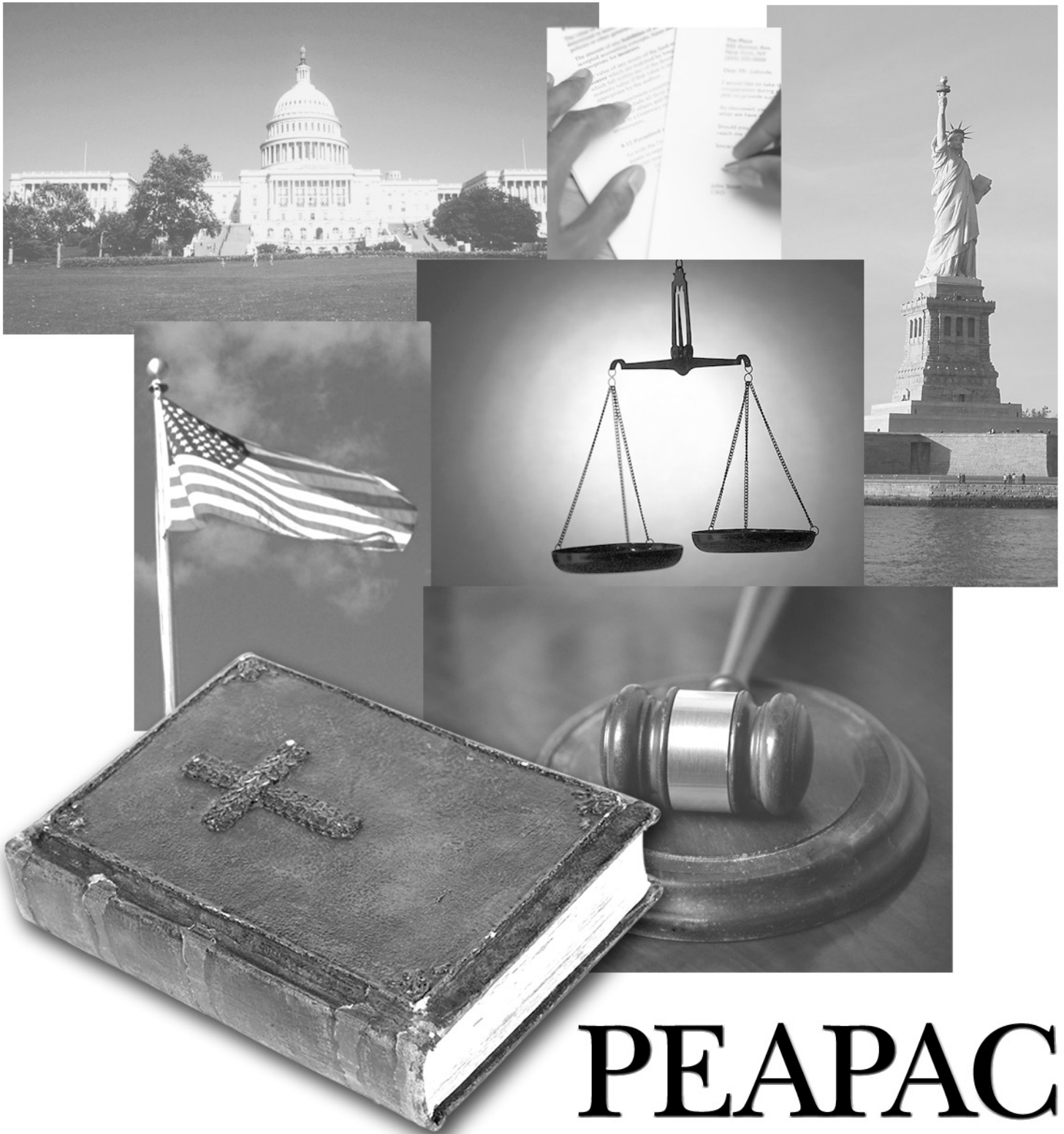


ISSUES 2006 A Biblical Ballot Measure Voter's Guide



PEAPAC

Transforming Civil
Government Through Biblical Truth

PEAPAC 2006 A Biblical Ballot Measure Voter's Guide

PEAPAC Ballot Measure Recommendations

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Issues 2006 A Biblical Ballot Measures Voters Guide

Produced by PEAPAC Parents Education Association

P.O. Box 847, Canby, OR 97013 • (503) 263-8337 • www.peapac.org

Who We Are

The Parents Education Association was formed in 1983 in response to an intolerable lack of Christian freedom to home school in Oregon. Our original mission was to defend and extend home school and private school liberties. God blessed in ways far beyond our expectations. Heading a cooperative effort of home schoolers around the State, *we successfully introduced and lobbied for the passage of what became known as the 1985 Home School Freedom Bill.* Overnight, Oregon's home school law moved from one of worst to one of the best in the country.

For the next decade, *we successfully defended our hard fought home school liberties from attacks* by the education establishment in Salem. In recent years, OCHEAN (Oregon Christian Home Education Association and Network) has stepped up to take the lead in furthering home school liberties, with our full support and occasional assistance. Meanwhile, the Parents Education Association has worked arm in arm with other Christian political activists and *helped elect a pro-family majority in the Oregon House and Senate.*

In 1996, we began to publish the *Biblical Ballot Measures Voters Guide.* For the past eight years, we have helped hundreds of thousands of Christians throughout the State think through a wide variety of public policy issues from a distinctively Christian perspective.

Why Did We Choose the Name "Parents Education Association?"

For many years the *National Education Association, NEA*, has been

a strong political force. Some of its members are very good people, dedicated to helping children and culture. But overall this teacher's union has been a major factor in moving our country away from its Christian heritage and away from the freedoms that accompany Biblical faith. Starting with an initial emphasis on state-controlled or socialistic education, it has expanded to support many doubtful causes, such as abortion and sodomy (homosexuality). The *NEA* is a teachers union, and is publicly and vocally opposed to home schools and private schools that do not use state-certified teachers.

The *Parents Education Association, PEA*, was named to suggest our desire to be a counterweight to the NEA. Our name also points to our desire to unite parents to fight politically for parental freedom in education. *Our vision for America is a return to the faith of our fathers, and the resultant freedom, liberty and order that accompany a culture built on God's Word.* The mechanism we use for this purpose is PEAPAC, the Parents Education Association Political Action Committee, which is exclusively organized to support and oppose candidates and statewide Ballot Measures, based on a biblical worldview.

Christian, not Conservative

Micah 6:8 says God requires three things of men. These are "to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God." Conservatives focus on doing justice, while liberals focus on loving mercy, and neither, apart from the regenerating work of Christ, walk humbly with God. As a result, the conservative's justice is not Biblical. They want longer prison sentences, not restitution, for instance.

The liberal's acts of mercy are not really merciful. For instance, God gives the slothful man hunger to awaken in him the need to work. The liberal's welfare program takes away that godly incentive. In the words of Proverbs 12:10 "the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel."

We don't need right wing politics or left wing politics, but a Bible-wing approach to political action. *The Parents Education Association is dedicated to seeking out the truths of God's Word as they apply to public policy matters, and then speaking it into the public arena.*

G. K. CHESTERTON ON THE POLITICAL RIGHT AND LEFT OF HIS TIMES

"The whole modern world has divided itself into Conservatives and Progressives. The business of Progressives is to go on making mistakes. The business of Conservatives is to prevent mistakes from being corrected. Even when the revolutionist might himself repent of his revolution, the traditionalist is already defending it as part of his tradition. Thus we have two great types—the advanced person who rushes us into ruin, and the retrospective person who admires the ruins."

—G. K. Chesterton

BALLOT MEASURE ANALYSIS

MEASURE 39



OFFICIAL BALLOT TITLE:

Prohibits Public Body From Condemning Private Real Property If Intends To Convey To Private Party

SIMPLY STATED:

Restores Private Property

PEAPAC EXPLANATION

This Measure would restore private property rights that existed in Oregon prior to the U.S. Supreme Court's Kelo decision. Under most circumstances, it would make it illegal for the government to take your property for the purpose of selling it to another private property owner.

PEAPAC COMMENTARY

In the landmark 2005 Kelo v. City of New London decision, the U. S. Supreme Court, by a 5-4 vote, ruled that government could transfer land from one private owner to another to further economic development. This greatly curtailed private property rights across America.

Private property is a basic Biblical freedom. The 8th Commandment prohibits theft. The case laws (Exo. 21-23) require restitution when property is stolen or damaged. Our Declaration of Independence says we have inalienable rights of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." This was a restatement of John Locke's "life, liberty and property." Our happiness is tied to the right use of our property.

As an example of great wickedness on the part of rulers, the Bible gives us the account of King Ahab's murder of Naboth. The driving force behind this murder was Ahab's desire for Naboth's land. Like some state officials today, Ahab thought he knew of a better use for Naboth's land than Naboth did. Instead of a vineyard, Ahab thought it should be a vegetable garden. Like modern state officials, Ahab was willing to give Naboth the value of his land, or land someplace else. But Naboth liked the particular piece of land God had given him. So, like some state officials today, Ahab was willing to use the full power of his office to re-direct, by force if necessary, the use of Naboth's land.

In some ways, what is happening under the Kelo decision is even worse than what Ahab did. He had to pay wicked men to lie in court! Ahab couldn't just re-interpret the law and say it meant what it hadn't for centuries, as our Supreme Court did last year.

For over two hundred years, our nation's laws heavily restricted government's ability to take private property. There had to be a compelling public use for the land, such as a road. The Supreme Court erred and erred badly in the 2005 Kelo decision, which changed this 200 year old protection. The court overstepped its interpretive role by broadening the definition of "public use" under the 1st Amendment to include the confiscation of private property for the purpose of turning it over to private developers. The result has been disastrous. Some local governments (for example, Long Beach, California and Sand Springs, Oklahoma) have even tried to condemn churches to make way for private parking lots and developments.

Measure 39 will prevent like atrocities from happening in Oregon. We strongly urge your Yes vote on Measure 39.

MEASURE 40



OFFICIAL BALLOT TITLE:

Amends Constitution: Requires Oregon Supreme Court Judges And Court Of Appeals Judges To Be Elected By District

SIMPLY STATED:

Restores Geographic Balance to Our Judiciary

PEAPAC EXPLANATION

Currently, Oregon Supreme Court and Court of Appeals judges are elected by state-wide vote. Under Measure 40 these judges would be elected within a particular geographic region. .

PEAPAC COMMENTARY

Judges should enforce laws Legislators make. But in just the past two years judges, not lawmakers, have drastically curtailed private property rights, overturned laws prohibiting live sex shows in Oregon, and decided that parents have no right to oversee the sexual education of their children.

- On June 23, 2005, the U.S. Supreme Court greatly expanded government's ability to **take your land by means of eminent domain**. They can now favor one private party who is trying to take a land owner's property by force.
- On September 29, 2005, the Oregon Supreme Court ruled that **live sex shows** are a protected form of free speech in Oregon.
- On November 2, 2005, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals decided **parents can't stop sexual surveys of their elementary school kids**.

Measure 40 corrects two major problems that have contributed to this growing judicial activism.

First, judges are not generally known by the people who vote on them. They should be. Deuteronomy 1:13 says they are to be "wise men, and understanding, and *known among your tribes*." Measure 40 creates a situation where people will be more likely to know the judicial candidates, who will be from their part of the state. They will be "known among" the people.

Second, since judges are not known, **incumbency** is a nearly insurmountable barrier to replacing activist judges. When people don't know the candidates, they tend to vote for the Incumbent. Candidates are then difficult to recruit, since they know it's hard to get more votes than the candidate with the "I" (for Incumbent) next to his name. This is why so many judges run unopposed. But in the new districts of Measure 40, none of the present judges will be incumbents. There will be no "I" for Incumbent behind anyone's name. This will make it much easier to recruit non-activist lawyers to replace the judges who have, for example, overturned laws that would have outlawed live sex shows in Oregon. We strongly urge your Yes vote on Measure 40.

MEASURE 41



OFFICIAL BALLOT TITLE:

Allows Income Tax Deduction Equal To Federal Exemptions Deduction To Substitute For State Exemption Credit

SIMPLY STATED:

Cuts Taxes

PEAPAC EXPLANATION

*Measure 41 gives taxpayers a choice in figuring their taxes - the current method of tax credits or a new option of income deductions. The **tax credit** currently is \$154 per personal exemption, whereas the federal **income deduction** is \$3200 per exemption. Most who use the new deduction method would get a tax cut.*

PEAPAC COMMENTARY

In 1 Samuel 8, God warns us not to look to big government to solve all our problems. He tells us that when we do this, two negative results follow. First, **government grows** in its control of our lives. Second, it finances this growth through **taxes**, making it harder to prosper financially.

We have these two problems today. Most Oregonians saw small or no income increases in the past few years, But the State's "income" went up about 7% per year for each of the past 15 years! You probably don't get an annual 7% pay raise, right? But the state does, and **it comes out of your pocket!** The result is increasing and unnecessary state bureaucracy, and more state control of our lives. That 7% came out of the taxpayers' pockets, of course. The end result is that most families find it harder and harder to make ends meet.

Measure 41 addresses both of these problems. First, it gives most citizens a **tax cut**, helping them to pay their other bills. Second, it reduces the amount of money the state gets, thus **restricting the growth of state bureaucracy**. We urge a Yes vote on Measure 41.

A government which robs Peter to pay Paul can always depend on the support of Paul.
– George Bernard Shaw

I contend that for a nation to try to tax itself into prosperity is like a man standing in a bucket and trying to lift himself up by the handle.
– Winston Churchill

A government big enough to give you everything you want, is strong enough to take everything you have.
– Thomas Jefferson

PEAPAC •

MEASURE 42

X NO

OFFICIAL BALLOT TITLE:

Prohibits Insurance Companies From Using Credit Score Or "Credit Worthiness" In Calculating Rates Or Premiums

SIMPLY STATED:

Micro-manages the Insurance Industry

PEAPAC EXPLANATION

Insurance companies use a wide variety of factors to determine prices. One of these is credit score or history. This Measure would make it illegal for them to use credit data in its setting of rates or premiums.

PEAPAC COMMENTARY

We oppose this Measure on three grounds. First, it isn't the State's job to micro-manage private business. Second, this is particularly true when the business is, in essence, rewarding good behavior. Third, the sorts of technical questions raised in this Measure are best left to the Legislature to sort out.

First, the insurance industry, though increasingly regulated, needs the freedom to make statistical correlations and set prices based on such data. The Bible, in promoting private property, also commends the freedom to enter into business transactions relatively unhindered by the civil state. A marketplace free from unnecessary and unprofitable civil micro-management is to be desired. Measure 41 is a wrong-headed attempt to over-regulate insurance companies.

Second, one's credit score usually reflects the decisions, good or bad, that one makes in life. The use of credit scores has the practical effect of rewarding those who have made good decisions. Measure 42 would take away a tool that presently rewards good decisions, likely resulting in higher premiums for good people.

Third, this is a complicated issue. While the ability to vote on state-wide ballot measures is a wonderful and needed tool for governance, it has its limits. What is the statistical basis for the use of credit scores in this way? Have people actually been damaged by this practice? What unintended consequences may come from the passage of this technical piece of legislation? The Legislature can take the time, hear expert testimony and sort through the complex issues raised by this Measure. Isn't this what we pay them to do?

We therefore urge a No vote on Measure 42.

MEASURE 43

✓ YES

OFFICIAL BALLOT TITLE:

Requires 48-Hour Notice to Unemancipated Minor's Parent Before Providing Abortion; Authorizes Lawsuits, Physician Discipline

SIMPLY STATED:

Protects Teen Daughters

PEAPAC EXPLANATION

This Measure requires girls aged 15, 16 and 17 to notify a parent at least 48 hours before getting an abortion. There are several exceptions provided, including when the girl's health would be endangered by waiting.

PEAPAC COMMENTARY

From the Ten Commandments, through the Proverbs and on into the New Testament restatements in Ephesians and Colossians of the Fifth Commandment ("Honor your father and mother, that it may go well with you") the Bible places tremendous importance on the parent-child relationship.

It is hard to imagine that Oregonians have actually created a situation where a 15 year old girl can make what is perhaps the most important decision of her life without even talking with Mom or Dad.

A pregnant 15 year old girl is frequently under tremendous pressure from her boyfriend, school counselor, friends and social service agencies to get an abortion. The sad fact is that irresponsible adult boyfriends frequently apply great pressure on young teens to get an abortion, and to not tell her parents.

Measure 43 simply adds a parent to the group of counselors the girl talks with. And, of course, her parent, in almost all cases, is the one who knows and loves her most, and cares most about her well-being and happiness. Her parent is in the best position to be a loving help to her.

We strongly urge your support of Measure 43.

MEASURE 44



OFFICIAL BALLOT TITLE:

Allows Any Oregon Resident Without Prescription Drug Coverage To Participate In Oregon Prescription Drug Program

SIMPLY STATED:

Lowers Oregonians' Drug Costs Without Increasing State Spending

PEAPAC EXPLANATION

This Measure expands the current OPDP (Oregon Prescription Drug Program). It currently provides discounted drug prices for low-income seniors without drug coverage. If Measure 44 passes, all Oregonians without drug coverage will be eligible.

PEAPAC COMMENTARY

The State tells us the fiscal impact of this Measure is zero. The OPDP doesn't use tax dollars to supplement low cost prescriptions. And any increased administrative costs as a result of this Measure's passage will be offset by grants and lower state costs for drug coverage for state employees. Additionally, the OPDP does not mandate that all pharmacies have to be part of the program. If it did, our view of the Bible's teaching on the proper role of government and taxes would raise concerns about it. Instead, the state negotiates lower prices with the participating pharmacies. The lower prices are a result of the large pool of buyers in the program. So, the passage of Measure 45 would increase the number of participants but would NOT cost Oregon's taxpayers any money. Nor would it force pharmacies to engage in practices that were not in their own best interest.

The program will make more affordable prescription drugs available for the uninsured. The drug companies, pharmacies and associated lobbyists are not opposing this measure.

While market forces may result in lower than anticipated drug savings, we see no reason to prohibit the voluntary financial arrangements of this program and the resultant lower drug prices for the uninsured. We recommend a yes vote on this measure

MEASURE 45



OFFICIAL BALLOT TITLE:

Amends Constitution: Limits State Legislators: Six Years As Representative, Eight Years As Senator, Fourteen Years In Legislature

SIMPLY STATED:

Term Limits

PEAPAC EXPLANATION

This measure would limit the number of years someone may serve in the Oregon Legislature.

PEAPAC COMMENTARY

We are very sympathetic with the impulses that bring this Measure to the Ballot. While the problems this Measure seeks to address are real, we think its the wrong solution. We oppose this measure for four reasons.

First, elders, judges and various rulers in the Bible are *normally described* as serving at the consent of the governed, apart from artificially imposed limits. Now, there is no obvious prohibition of term limits in the Bible, so we are free to engage in them. Still, it seems reasonable to infer that usually, rulers are not subject to set terms.

Second, good law-makers are hard to find. Term limit proponents want to solve this by cycling people into office. But we think the best solution is to identify those few who can rule well, and keep them around as long as we can! God's Word tells us that the white-haired, the aged, are to be valued (Prov. 16:31; 20:29). They are to be listened to since experience normally produces increased effectiveness and wisdom at one's work. *Hebrews 5:14 says those best able to rule ("to discern good and evil"), are those who have "by reason of use" (that is, through long experience) trained themselves for this task.*

Third, it's hard to find rulers who act *independent of the liberal state bureaucracy*. The flow of information to a lawmaker in Salem is primarily funneled through the bureaucracy, which tends to be liberal. That's always the case. But when we send inexperienced lawmakers to Salem, they are even more prone to listen to the bureaucrats.

This year, the results of the first comprehensive, multi-state study of the effects of term limits, *Coping with Term Limits, A Practical Guide*, was released. The study was a cooperative effort among the National Conference of State Legislatures, the Council on State Governments, the State Legislative Leaders Foundation and a group of political scientists. It found that term

limits have tipped the balance of power away from legislatures and toward governors' offices and the bureaucrats in the executive branch.

Inexperienced Legislators need more help with the process. And the liberal state bureaucracy, located right there in Salem, are more than ready to "help."

Fourth, term limits *preempt voters* in local districts who may wish to keep their lawmaker for many years. We don't think the electorate of the state should make these decisions for local districts.

We certainly "feel the pain" of those who bring term limits to the ballot. Many voters are apathetic, entrenched Legislators can become increasingly insensitive to their constituents and buddy up with the bureaucrats, etc. This list of problems is real. But the solution that Measure 45 proposes, while well-intentioned, is the wrong one, in our estimation. *The real "term limits" is an informed engaged electorate.* This Measure is, in our view, an enabler of lazy voters, and should be opposed. We therefore recommend a No vote on Measure 45.

MEASURE 46

X NO

OFFICIAL BALLOT TITLE:

Amends Constitution: Allows Laws Regulating Election Contributions, Expenditures Adopted By Initiative Vote Or 3/4 Of Both Legislative Houses

SIMPLY STATED:

Controls Private Political Speech

PEAPAC EXPLANATION

The Oregon Constitution, in guaranteeing freedom of speech, prohibits laws that restrict spending on state or local elections in Oregon. Measure 46 would change that, allowing limits on campaign spending.

PEAPAC COMMENTARY

This Measure and its companion, Measure 47, are sponsored by some of the most liberal groups in our state. Joined in opposing these measures are usually liberal labor unions and various conservatives. Everyone, conservatives and liberals alike, want to make some changes to the way campaigns are financed. We favor reasonable disclosure and reporting requirements. But we are opposed to imposing limits on individual donations, because this, in essence, is a restraint on your political speech.

That's why we oppose this Measure. It is aimed not just at special interest groups, unions and corporate giving. It would also pave the way for *restrictions on how the average Oregonian could use his money to freely speak his views into the political arena.*

They say the road to hell is paved with good intentions. Over the past few decades, various attempts have been made to curb the abuses in election spending. But the end result has not been the empowerment of the little guy. Just the reverse has happened. Increasingly, candidates must have a great deal of personal wealth to run for office, hardly a step in the right direction. We urge a No vote on Measure 46.

MEASURE 47

X NO

OFFICIAL BALLOT TITLE:

Revises Campaign Finance Laws: Limits Or Prohibits Contributions And Expenditures; Adds Disclosure, New Reporting Requirements

SIMPLY STATED:

Partially Gags Private Political Speech

PEAPAC EXPLANATION

This companion Measure to Measure 46, would impose a number of limits on campaign spending, and mandate new reporting requirements.

PEAPAC COMMENTARY

Speech is arguably the most powerful weapon in the world. Speech is what God used to bring the world into existence. The use of our speech to spread the good news of Christ's Lordship is what changes men's hearts and lives. When men

change, the cultures they produce change. Godly speech brings about the betterment of the world.

Dialogue is a very important aspect of speech. When dialogue flows, better ideas and understanding flow as well. This is true in the political arena as well. The free flow of political speech results in a better understanding of candidates and measures we vote on. Conversely, when speech is hindered, our information is reduced and we make bad political decisions.

Measure 47 would place a stranglehold on various forms of political speech. As Christians, we are beginning to find our political "voice." But this Measure would severely limit the amount of money we can use individually and jointly to speak the implications of God's Word into this part of our world. The end result is *diminished political speech, and diminished dialogue* about the complex issues of our day. We therefore strongly urge a NO vote on Measure 47.

MEASURE 48



OFFICIAL BALLOT TITLE:

Amends Constitution: Limits Biennial Percentage Increase In State Spending To Percentage Increase In State Population, Plus Inflation

SIMPLY STATED:

Controls State Spending

PEAPAC EXPLANATION

Measure 48 limits how much the State can spend, but not how much it can receive in taxes. State spending would be limited to the previous budget period, adjusted for inflation and population growth.

PEAPAC COMMENTARY

Astonishingly, state spending has increased roughly 8 percent a year for each of the past twenty-five years. In 1 Samuel 8, God warns us about over-reaching governments. They will take more than they should, and they will spend every bit of it.

One way to control this is to limit taxes. But in good times and lean, this brings problems. In good times, the state will have lots of money to spend, and probably do stupid things with it. In lean times, tax revenues will diminish, and it will be hard to cut programs that may be more needed than ever.

Measure 48 takes a different, and we think, better approach. It restricts state spending to present levels, adjusted for inflation and population growth. In good economic times, the excess can't be spent, but it can be saved in a rainy day fund. It could then be used in lean times, when taxes fall, and needs increase. The spending cap imposed by this Measure could be suspended and the funds put to use in the event of a true "rainy day," as defined by a vote of the House & Senate and the approval of a simple majority of voters.

The course of financial wisdom according to the Bible, is to stay out of debt and save for the future. Measure 48's spending limitation and savings provision helps the state do just that. We strongly urge a Yes vote on Measure 48.

A 19th Century Christian Theologian's Comments on Secular Conservatism

"This is a party which never conserves anything. Its history has been that it demurs to each aggression of the progressive party, and aims to save its credit by a respectable amount of growling, but always acquiesces at last in the innovation. What was the resisted novelty of yesterday is today one of the accepted principles of conservatism; it is now conservative only in affecting to resist the next innovation, which will tomorrow be forced upon its timidity and will be succeeded by some third revolution to be denounced and then adopted in its turn."

"American conservatism is merely the shadow that follows radicalism as it moves forward towards perdition. It remains behind it, but never retards it, and always advances near its leader. This pretended salt hath utterly

lost its savor: wherewith shall it be salted? Its impotency is not hard, indeed, to explain. It is worthless because it is the conservatism of expediency only, and not of sturdy principle. It intends to risk nothing serious for the sake of the truth, and has no idea of being guilty of the folly of martyrdom."

"It always - when about to enter a protest - very blandly informs the wild beast whose path it essays to stop, that "its bark is worse than its bite" and that it only means to save its manners by enacting its decent role of resistance. The only practical purpose which it now subserves in American politics is to give enough exercise to radicalism to keep it "in wind," and to prevent it's becoming pursy and lazy from having nothing to whip."

-R. L. Dabney, *Discussions*, Vol. 4

19TH CENTURY PRINCETON PROFESSOR ON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

I am as sure as I am of Christ's reign that a comprehensive and centralized system of national education, separated from religion, as is now commonly proposed, will prove the most appalling engine for the propagation of anti-Christian and atheistic unbelief, and of anti-social nihilistic ethics, individual, social and political, which this sin-rent world has ever seen.

....It is capable of exact demonstration that if every party in the State has the right of excluding from the public schools whatever he does not believe to be true, then

he that believes most must give way to him that believes least, and then he that believes least must give way to him that believes absolutely nothing, no matter in how small a minority the atheists or the agnostics may be. It is self-evident that on this scheme, if it is consistently and persistently carried out in all parts of the country, the United States system of national popular education will be the most efficient and wide instrument for the propagation of Atheism [and humanism] which the world has ever seen.

-Professor A. A. Hodge of Princeton (1823-1886)

PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND SEXUAL POLICIES

PRO-HOMOSEXUAL LEGISLATION IN CALIFORNIA VETOED BY MODERATE REPUBLICAN GOVERNOR

On September 6, 2006, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoed SB 1437. That bill, in its original form, would have forced all public school teachers to give a biased message about homosexuality to students as young as five years old. Under SB 1437, all instructional materials, school-sponsored activities, and textbooks would have been required to portray cross-dressing, sex change operations, and homosexuality, and bisexuality in a positive manner.

This shows us that the goal of homosexual activists is not simple neutrality. Rather, it is taxpayer-funded, state-mandated positive propaganda about what the Bible clearly calls abhorrent sin. The problem is the politicization of education that always accompanies public (sic, government) schools. We support Measures 41 and 48, and think the long-term solution to ballooning state spending is the de-funding of

the government schools. The end result will be the de-politicization of education

NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION APPROVES PRO-HOMOSEXUAL RESOLUTION

Nathan Burchfiel of the Cybernet News Service reported on July 07, 2006 that "the nation's largest teachers' union voted to amend its resolutions Wednesday to include support for homosexual 'marriage.' The amendment, which met with harsh criticism from conservative family groups, passed with little resistance from delegates."

"The National Education Association's resolution on 'racism, sexism, sexual orientation and gender identification discrimination' will be amended to include the statement that those factors should not affect the legal rights and obligations of the partners in a legally-recognized domestic partnership, civil union, or marriage."

CHRISTIAN CHILDREN NEED CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Once more tax cuts and state spending limits are on the ballot this year. Critics say that passage of either Measure 41 or 48 will negatively impact public school funding. But is that necessarily bad? We think not. We believe its time for Christians to seriously consider the following facts, and try to provide for a distinctively Christian education for their children.

First, the current system of public schools "leave God out." Because of certain Supreme Court rulings over the past century, the public school system is, at its heart, self-consciously secular. At one time, this meant equal time for Christian and non-Christian perspectives. This is no longer the case. The secularized schools are becoming increasingly strident in its opposition to biblical truth. (See "Public Schools and Sexual Politics").

Second, because of this, these schools imply that knowledge is ethically neutral, which it is not (Proverbs 15:26, 24:9; 2 Cor. 10:5; Rom. 1:18-21). The implication is that the world can be truly known and understood without reference to its Creator - which it cannot.

Third, we ask "Is it the civil government's job to educate children?" When our Savior told us to render to Caesar the

things that are his, He implied that God had indeed established civil government. But He also clearly implied that certain things were given to the State, but that other things weren't. This being the case, we look to the Bible to tell us which is which. It seems to teach that civil government's job is to restrain certain sins by punishing evil-doers (Rom. 13:4) and to praise the righteous (2 Peter 2:14). No matter how good government-run schools may be, they do not accomplish either of these two God-given purposes of the State.

Fourth, these schools are largely paid for by people other than the children's parents. In the system of government that God set up for His people in the Old Testament, parents were responsible to pay directly for the cost to feed, clothe, and educate their own children. Our current high tax rates make it very, very difficult for many parents to do that today. But the answer is to rethink the whole concept of government (public) schools and take small but determined steps towards true privatization of education. We applaud those Christians who teach and work in the government schools, as they attempt to minister to children. But we are convinced that it is time to develop an "exit strategy" from public schools for Christian kids.

PRESSING TOWARDS MATURITY

“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”—Hebrews 5:12-14

This is a remarkable text. It tells us that all adult Christians should be pressing towards the mark of both teaching and ruling. The sermon to the Hebrews is not addressed to pastors, but to the average layman. In chapter 13, verses 7 and 17, the author urges the laymen to have the correct attitude and knowledge of their pastors. So, the above text is addressed to us as laymen. Thus, in some sense, we are all to be teachers.

Additionally, we are all to seek to govern. The phrase “discern both good and evil” is a phrase used throughout the Bible to refer to ruling or governing. In 1 Kings 3:9, for instance, Solomon asked God for an understanding heart, that he might “discern between good and evil” since, he says “who is able to judge this great people of Yours?” Our goal should be governing, ruling in the gate, discerning good and evil.

The text from Hebrews also tells us that the ability to rule is normally something that must be worked at. It is the result of years of training our senses to think Biblically about the world around us. And it is, of course, a matter of seeking wisdom from God’s Word. The Book of Proverbs was written by Solomon, whom God did indeed bless with discerning or knowing good and evil, with the ability to rule wisely. Solomon passes on that wisdom to us in Proverbs.

Chapters 25-31 of that book are explicitly written to mature us in ruling or governing wisely. The very first of these Proverbs, 25:2, tells us wherein consists the true glory of kings. The rest of chapter 25 is an exposition of true vs. false glory, and is an introduction to the balance of the book, whose main concern is civil governance. It is written to and for kings.

In fact, the arc of the entire book of Proverbs, its movement, is training a prince to be a wise king. The young prince is warned about the right and wrong kinds of women, and the right and wrong kinds of governance. By the end, he is a king, who has a wonderful queen and who knows how to rule.

The heart, or literary center, of the book of Proverbs are 30 “sayings of the wise,” found in 22:17-24:22:

These are arranged in three sets of ten sayings. The first ten, found in 22:22-23:11, are focused on vocation. The second set of ten, found in 23:12-24:4, are focused on building a home and family. The final set of ten, found in 24:5-24:22, are focused on ruling in the gate, and on the cultural strength of wisdom. The first set of ten sayings stress God’s law, with application to vocation. The second stress the maturation of a son into a householder. The third set stresses the maturation of the householder into a ruler. This is to be the normal trajectory of the Christian’s life.

Here’s the point. The church of Jesus Christ has ignored almost a third of the book of Proverbs! We are content to have jobs and families, but we have generally failed to press towards the mark of civil governance. Instead of moving into the gate in our older years, we move into our retirement homes. Is it any wonder then that we find our country in the shape it’s in?

Every time we publish the Biblical Ballot Measures Voters Guide, our aim is to help us all to train our senses, to think about public policy matters from a distinctively biblical perspective. Our goal is that we would press towards the mark of Biblical maturity. We don’t think we have the final word on this year’s ballot measures. But we do hope and trust that we are challenging the body of Christ to press towards the mark, to train ourselves to think about how the Bible applies in the critical area of public policy. Faithfulness to the King of Kings should result in nothing else.

WWPD?

“Therefore, I urge you, imitate me.”
—1 Corinthians 4:16

WWPD (What Would Paul Do?) seems a very legitimate Biblical question in light of the above citation. I always feel a bit uneasy when I see WWJD (What Would Jesus Do?), since Jesus, of course, had a very distinct and unique calling. To me, WWJD always brings to mind Bob Dylan’s song 115th Dream. In it, he wrote “‘You know they refused Jesus, too’ He said, ‘You’re not Him.’”

In Acts 25, Paul made full use of his Roman citizenship by appealing to Caesar. He engaged in “the political system” strategically and tactically as he sought the furtherance of the gospel. WWPD? I think he would have used his citizenship rights of voting, and he would have used his vote strategically and tactically.

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Yes, Dennis, I want to help. Here's my contribution to help bring God's Word into the political arena.

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