

# ISSUES 2014 A Biblical Ballot Measure Voter's Guide

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## PEAPAC Ballot Measure Recommendations

| Recommendation | Ballot Measure | Subject   | Page Number |
|----------------|----------------|---|-------------|
| No             | Measure 86     | Provides State Funding of College and University Education. . . . .                   | 2           |
| Yes            | Measure 87     | Lets Judges Teach at State Universities or Join the National Guard. . . . .           | 2           |
| No             | Measure 88     | Requires DMV to Issue Driver's Licenses to Illegal Aliens. . . . .                    | 2           |
| No             | Measure 89     | Enacts Oregon Equal Rights Amendment. . . . .   | 2           |
| No             | Measure 90     | Creates A Unitary Primary for All Candidates, Top Two Go To General Election. . . . . | 3           |
| No             | Measure 91     | Legalizes Recreational Marijuana. . . . .   | 3           |
| No             | Measure 92     | Requires Labeling of Some Genetically Engineered Foods. . . . .                       | 3           |

*“And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.” –Romans 12:2*

Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold (Phillips translation). Do not let yourselves be shaped by what everyone else does (Paul Achtemeier commentary). Resist this process of being continually molded and fashioned according to the pattern of this present age with its conventions and standards of values (Charles Cranfield commentary).

***Our comments are intended to start discussions, not end them.***

This Biblical Ballot Measure Voters Guide is given to our readers to encourage them to think Biblically about public policy issues. Christians should vote as Christians, not conservatives, liberals, progressives, constitutionalists or libertarians. To achieve true justice in our culture, let's do more than talk generally about social justice. Let's work hard to let the Bible define social justice. And let's let God's Word give us the means by which it is to be accomplished. The presupposition of our reasoning is that God's Word gives us a perfect model for social justice. Let's avoid a "me-too" attitude to socialistic goals and statist means and get right to the heart of real justice as God declares it.

*“Surely I have taught you statutes and judgments, just as the LORD my God commanded me, that you should act according to them in the land which you go to possess. ‘Therefore be careful to observe them; for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes, and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’” “For what great nation is there that has God so near to it, as the LORD our God is to us, for whatever reason we may call upon Him?”<sup>8</sup> And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day? –Deuteronomy 4:5–8*

Our job is to try to discern the core truths concerning justice and public policy contained in the Bible and discern their proper application to our context, this side of the Cross, and in our historical setting. A daunting task! But Jesus came to save sinners, transforming them into disciples who would be used by the Holy Spirit to “bring justice to victory” (Matthew 12:20).

*“To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” –Isaiah 8:20*

*“Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty; for all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and You are exalted as head over all.” –1 Chronicles 29:11*



**Measure 86**  
*Provides State Funding of College and University Education*

We strongly oppose this Measure for several reasons. First, it would further indebt the State of Oregon. Oregon's Constitution wisely limits the ability of the State to incur debt, reflecting the Bible's warnings regarding indebtedness (Prov. 22:26-27; Rom. 13:8). This Measure would actually change our Constitution, enabling more debt.

Second, this Measure would, if needed, repay this debt from tax dollars. That means it would lead either to higher taxes or a cut in spending for other state programs. Some small level of taxation is necessary for the limited role that the Bible gives civil government. But the Bible warns about bad governments that would take more and more of what people produce by their labor (see 1 Samuel 8:11-15). Currently, the combined tax haul of government amounts to nearly half of all the wealth the people produce each year.

Third, while the Bible and our American system call for a limited civil government, this Measure seems to be part of an effort to add yet one more significant government entitlement – tax supported higher education for all. We all want what's best for our children, and it's understandable to consider this Measure in that light. But the government has slowly but surely grown to control more and more of what the Bible sees as properly overseen by private citizens, business, churches, and voluntary associations. The carrot that the government holds out in front of us is always tied to a more controlling bureaucracy, less money under our own control, and less freedom.

What the State finances, it controls. As the world's Golden Rule puts it, whoever has the gold makes the rules. And this is our fourth reason to oppose Measure 86 – education increasingly paid for by the State reflects more and more the political goals of the State. Public primary and secondary schools have increasingly become tools for progressivist ideology, which favors, for instance, radical environmentalism over business. Measure 86 would likely further extend what can be called liberal indoctrination into the higher education system.

Fifth, we oppose Measure 86 because it violates basic Biblical instruction about the need for personal responsibility. In the Bible, education of children is the responsibility of those children's parents, not other adults. Likewise, it is the responsibility of adults seeking higher education to pay for it. Measure 86 would coercively make some people pay for other people's college education. This violates a fundamental biblical principle of personal

responsibility.

Five fingers make a fist, and we think these five reasons make a strong case for voting No on Measure 86.



**Measure 87**  
*Lets Judges Teach at State Universities or Join the National Guard*

While this is primarily a technical fix with little or no opposition, we want to make one Biblical case for its passage. From the Bible's perspective, it is hard to overestimate the significance of judges. Our experience clearly attests to this truth. We have seen plenty of cases of judicial activism. This reached a new high (or rather, low) this past May when Federal Judge Michael McShane overturned our Constitution's definition of marriage. While federal judges like McShane are appointed, we elect many regional judges every election cycle. All too often we know very little about these judicial candidates. This is not due to a lack of trying. Systems have been put in place which make it very difficult for a voter to discern a judicial candidate's views. And searching any judicial cases is very time-intensive. Measure 87 would allow judges to teach at public universities. This would potentially bring a bit more knowledge of those judges who make use of this provision, resulting in somewhat more information for voters who are called on to vote for these very important positions.



**Measure 88**  
*Requires DMV to Issue Driver's Licenses to Illegal Aliens*

One of the most repeated commands of God is to love the stranger, having particular regard for those from other cultures (see for instance Lev. 19:34). Their vulnerability of not knowing the language or culture makes them special objects of compassion and care from us, particularly since we were once "strangers in the land of Egypt." In the New Testament, this is specifically alluded to by the exhortation to be hospitable. Literally, the Greek word translated "hospitable" is "love of strangers." The word "hospitality" in the Bible is not about being kind and welcoming to your friends, but rather towards those who are strangers to you. This instinct is reflected in some supporters of this Measure, and we commend that. Biblical policies on immigration may well result in more open borders than our current system.

But to take these principles and apply them piece-meal to our current crisis, involving illegal immigrants, is wrong-headed, ignor-

ing other biblical teaching. For instance, the stranger described in the Bible are those who are living in obedience to God's law, which was also the law of the land (Ex. 12:49). Biblical texts to love the stranger should not be taken out of their context to support what is precisely condemned in the Bible – law-breaking. This is Scripture-twisting in the pulpit, which this Measure would move into the voter's box.

Additionally, the use of tax-payer sponsored benefits by these illegals is analogous to theft, since this is paid for not with voluntary giving but rather coercion of the taxpayer.

It is not love of someone to condone or even encourage them in lawlessness. Our duty of love to the stranger should include exhorting them to be faithful to try to attain legal status and only then enter into the privileges of citizens. We urge a No vote on Measure 88 precisely because we do indeed love the stranger, and seek his joyful obedience to the Savior, and not the callousing over of his conscience.



**Measure 89**  
*Enacts Oregon Equal Rights Amendment*

The Bible clearly asserts the equality of men and women.

They both are image-bearers of God (Gen. 1:27), joint-heirs of the gracious gift of life (1 Pet. 3:7), and in Jesus Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female (Gal. 3:28). So our Bible-informed instinct is to support a Measure that purports to desire simple equality of men and women.

The sad fact, however, is that state Equal Rights Amendments (ERAs) such as this one change more than the equality of men and women.

First, they have been used as Constitutional support for same-sex marriages. The supreme courts of Hawaii and Massachusetts ruled that ERA requires same-sex marriage. The reasoning seems to be that laws must be "sex-blind" (think color-blind), so to speak. So marriage should be blind as to the sex of those entering into it. But God created men and women as a complement to one another in marriage, and insists that only such marriages are legitimate.

Second, in relationship to abortion funding, the New Mexico Supreme Court, for instance, ruled that ERA requires the state to pay for all abortions for low-income women. The American Civil Liberties Union has argued in other states, with varying degrees of success, that ERA requires tax funding for abortions because it is classified as a medical procedure. State ERAs increase abortions, which is the killing of pre-born infants.

Abortion and same-sex marriage are clearly in opposition to the plain teaching of God's Word. That's why Oregon Right to Life strongly opposes this Measure, and we also urge your No vote on Measure 89.



## **Measure 90** *Creates A Unitary Primary for All Candi- dates, Top Two Go To General Election*

The passage of Measure 90 would dramatically change our current political system. We think the changes proposed by Measure 90 are not the right ones, so we urge a No vote. But there are good reasons to change our current system.

First, Christian political theorists have long been concerned about the two party system. The Bible warns us about "party spirit" or "factions," the sort of choosing sides with a group and one particular truth rather than with God and embracing all aspects of His truth.

Our nation's founding father had like concerns. In George Washington's farewell address he said the following about the dangers of political parties:

"They serve to organize faction, to give it an artificial and extraordinary force; to put, in the place of the delegated will of the nation, the will of a party, often a small but artful and enterprising minority of the community; and, according to the alternate triumphs of different parties, to make the public administration the mirror of the ill-concerted and incongruous projects of faction, rather than the organ of consistent and wholesome plans digested by common counsels, and modified by mutual interests."

Second, advocates of pro-family pro-business conservative policies have been out of power in Oregon for decades. They are tempted to approve almost any major shake-up of the political system, believing it really can't get much worse.

However, given the reality that change seems necessary, the question is, is this the right change? We are not convinced it is.

The end result of this system, now in place in California and Washington, seems to be the further advance of progressivist policies, which is radically at odds with much of what the Bible teaches. For instance, since its enactment in California, the system has produced super-majorities of progressivist Democrats in both their House and Senate.

A better alternative might be so-called "instant run-off voting." This is also called "preference voting" since voters rank the

candidates in order of preference rather than voting for a single candidate. This system is now being used in various countries, including Australia. So far, it looks promising.

While we share some of the same concerns as backers of Measure 90, we do not believe that this system has been sufficiently tested. Over the next few years, watching the results in Washington and California will help us make a more informed decision on how to change our political system.

The Bible encourages us to think carefully before making big decisions. This is a big decision, and we advise more thought and investigation of other alternatives before making it. We encourage a No vote on Measure 90.



## **Measure 91** *Legalizes Recreational Marijuana*

The Bible commands us to avoid drunkenness, which would include marijuana intoxication. God doesn't want us drunk, nor does He want us high! These states of intoxication represent a movement away from self-control and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18). The civil government in America has thus punished public drunkenness since its founding. At the same time, the Bible nowhere forbids all alcohol, nor should we. In fact it positively commends its use in moderation (Dt. 14:23-28; Ecc. 9:7; Ps. 104:15). It is clear to most Bible students that the Lord's Supper itself, to be a weekly celebration on the Lord's Day, is to include wine. Unlike alcohol, however, the only real purpose of recreational marijuana is to get high, with its accompanying loss of self-control. So we oppose this Measure.

Some may want to argue for the decriminalization of marijuana possession, seeing it as a different issue than its use. But we think that it would be unwise to rush into this. There is a context for all legislation which must be kept in mind, along with possible unintended consequences. For instance, some medical marijuana dispensers are actually against this Measure, believing that recreational use will make it difficult to maintain adequate supplies for those who need it for medicinal purposes. This Measure does not, after all, simply say that marijuana growth, possession and moderate use are all now legal. Rather, it sets up a whole state-run bureaucracy to manage these matters, meaning a free market will not be in play.

There are other factors that are simply unknown concerning this Measure. What are the long term health effects? Can an adequate, inexpensive, easy test for marijuana intoxication while driving or working be developed?

What about addiction, and those studies that seem to point to long term memory loss and other possible brain effects? Law enforcement officials have told us repeatedly about a strong connection between marijuana use and crime.

Perhaps all will be well, and these concerns will be answered. We now have two states, Washington and Colorado, who have legalized recreational use. Lets watch them and try to get solid answers to all the questions. We think even proponents of the thrust of this Measure should try a "wait and see" approach. Vote No on Measure 91.



## **Measure 92** *Requires Labeling of Some Genetically Engi- neered Foods*

The representative system of government in our country and state finds its origins in the Bible. Even the "bi-cameral" legislative system (Senators and House members) can be found in the Hebrew republic of the Bible. In this system, laws are primarily the responsibility of elected officials who have the time, resources and access to skilled experts to make informed decisions as they frame laws that comport with God's Word.

In Psalm 131, we read that the author does not "involve myself in great matters or things too difficult for me." While it takes humility to admit it, there are many matters in life that are beyond our understanding, given the limitations of our time and callings. Some of these end up on the ballot.

Measure 92 concerns highly technical scientific processes that have only been used in the food industry for about 30 years, and that keep changing. It has what appears to be some significant weaknesses. For instance, it only applies to about one-third of all foods. For example, it wouldn't apply to beef, dairy or milk. But cows and chickens are regularly fed genetically engineered feed.

We are sympathetic to the concerns that prompt this Measure, even though negative effects of GE (genetic engineered) food or GMO (genetically manipulated organisms) has yet to be proven. While these understandable concerns are being further investigated, those with these concerns have the option of eating only foods labeled as organic or non-GMO. This seems sufficient to us.

But we recommend a No vote not because we have all the answers, but because we don't. When complex issues like food distribution systems and genetic engineering of food stuffs are being addressed, we think our elected representatives with all their resources are in a better place to write appropriate legislation.

# PARENTS EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

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