

For Immediate Release

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New Poll Shows Most Oregonians Back Legislature's Tax Measures

(Silverton) — By more than a two-to-one margin Oregonians favor the legislature's recently enacted tax increases on corporations and the wealthy, according to a new poll released today by the Oregon Center for Public Policy.

The results spell bad news for opponents of the tax measures, who have begun collecting signatures to repeal them at the ballot box. The poll showed that if the election were held today, 62 percent of likely voters would vote "yes" to uphold the legislature's actions, compared to 26 percent voting "no," with 11 percent being unsure how they would vote.

"Oregonians clearly favor protecting funding for education, health and public safety," said OCPP policy analyst Joy Margheim. "On the whole, they appear to believe that the legislature came up with a balanced and fair solution to the state's fiscal crisis brought on by the recession."

Grove Insight conducted the poll on July 29 to August 2, interviewing 500 Oregon registered voters likely to participate in next January's election, should it take place. The poll carries a margin of error of 4.4 percent.

In the waning days of the legislative session, lawmakers voted to balance the budget in part by raising \$733 million dollars in new revenue. That move avoided even deeper cuts to public services than those already set to take effect. More than 90 percent of Oregon's budget funds education, health and human services and public safety.

One of the legislative measures raises the state's corporate minimum tax from \$10 to a sliding scale that ranges from \$150 for small businesses to \$100,000 for corporations with annual sales in Oregon above \$100 million. It also temporarily raises the top tax rate from 6.6 percent to 7.9 percent for corporations with taxable income over \$250,000 in 2009 and 2010, decreasing to 7.6 percent in 2011 and 2012.

The top corporate tax rate increase expires in 2013, returning the rate to its pre-recession level for all except the largest corporations, those with over \$10 million in Oregon taxable income.

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The other measure temporarily changes the personal income tax rate from 9 percent to 10.8 percent on couples making more than \$250,000 a year and to 11 percent on couples making more than \$500,000 a year. The top rates decline in 2012, to settle permanently at 9.9 percent for the wealthiest taxpayers, couples earning over \$250,000 a year.

A significant majority of likely voters supported the permanent tax increases on big corporations and the richest Oregonians, poll results showed.

“Repealing the tax measures would deepen Oregonians’ pain, since 93 percent of the state’s budget goes directly to education, public safety and healthcare and other human services,” said Margheim, “Most Oregonians support the legislature’s balanced approach to preventing deep cuts to these critical services.”

The Oregon Center for Public Policy is a non-partisan research institute that does in-depth research and analysis on budget, tax and economic issues. The Center’s goal is to improve decision making and generate more opportunities for all Oregonians.

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Note to reporters and editors:

Results of the poll conducted by Grove Insight are available at www.ocpp.org. A memorandum by Grove Insight summarizing the poll results is available at www.ocpp.org as well.