

Don't give nonvoters a veto

by ELIZABETH SCHEELER of Pendleton

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Oregonian LTEs

Since the "Yes on 56 to restore election fairness" editorial (Sept. 26), several letter writers have tried to argue that repealing the "double majority" requirement for all May and November elections would be unfair to people who don't vote. One even had the gall to imply that it would be undemocratic to allow only the people who vote to have a voice in the outcome.

When the double majority law was passed in 1996, Oregon didn't have vote-by-mail, and elections for property tax measures were often held on obscure dates and only advertised to the people most likely to vote "yes."

However, vote-by-mail changed all that. Now, all voters get a ballot delivered directly to them and are free to vote "no" on any measures they don't like. That's what democracy is all about. Join me in voting "yes" on Measure 56.

ELIZABETH SCHEELER
Pendleton

And for more Monday letters to the editor about Measure 56, read on

I agree with you that Measure 56 will restore fairness, and here is why: Those who do not vote are saying that they agree with whatever the majority of those who actually vote decide. Vote "yes" on Measure 56.

LARRY MARGOLIS
North Portland

Tom Armeli's letter on Measure 56 ("Turn down Measure 56," Oct. 6) intended to urge a "no" vote on 56, but succeeded in arguing for it.

Armeli argued that in the example of a May 2005 ballot measure, only 43 percent voted, and 62 percent of those voters approved the measure, which would effectively mean that 26.7 percent of registered voters would have decided for the other 73.3 percent. What he's not saying is that the 73.3 percent who chose not to vote made a choice to leave the decision to those who did vote.

[With voting by mail,] it is easier to vote in Oregon than probably any other state. There is no excuse other than an emergency not to vote.

So, if you have an opinion, vote. And vote for Measure 56, which gives power to those who do vote, rather than stalling any measure where a majority of lazy/uninterested citizens cause a failure due to the "double majority" requirement.

LYNDA K. WALTHERS
Southwest Portland

"Double majority" has such an unfair political ring to it. There is only one majority of registered voters in a given district. Under the old system, a minority of voters could, and often did, go to the polls and raise everyone's taxes. If the measure didn't pass, the local government would put it back on the ballot again and again, until a minority finally voted it in.

The city of Tualatin has a \$49 million measure on the ballot for a new community center, parks, trails and so on. For a \$400,000 house, it would cost the homeowner \$548 a year.

If that passes, and I certainly hope it doesn't, it had better be by a real majority -- I mean, with more than 50 percent of the registered voters. If it does fail in the November election the city could send it out again in the spring and without the "double majority" in place it could slip through with only a minority of voters supporting it.

AL WILSON
Tualatin