

# Editorial: Oregon voters finally should modify ‘double majority rule’

By [NewsRegister.com](http://NewsRegister.com)

Who said majority rules? In Oregon politics, that sometimes is just not the case. Ballot Measure 56, which was referred by the 2007 Legislature to partially repeal the “double majority rule,” deserves a Yes vote.

According to the Secretary of State’s ballot summary, current law requires that 50 percent of voters must participate in an election in order to pass local property tax measures to raise money for schools, police, libraries, parks and other government services. The only exceptions are general elections in even-numbered years. Measure 56 amends the law and provides that a majority of voters voting in May and November elections may pass local property tax measures.

Hundreds of local tax measures in the past decade have failed, even though they received a majority of votes cast in the elections. Practically speaking, that means those issues then go before voters again, costing more taxpayer money. And chances are, costs to build that school or other public building will have gone up by the time the measure passes, again giving citizens less bang for the buck.

More importantly, the rule is fundamentally undemocratic because it gives power to those who do not bother to vote. It means those who don’t even bother to participate in the process have more say than citizens who take their right to vote seriously and responsibly.

There may have been a reason for the rule prior to Oregon’s vote by mail system since, on occasion, a tax measure might have slipped in under the radar. Not so now. If a property tax measure is proposed, ballot envelopes must be stamped with “Contains vote on proposed tax,” clearly warning voters to pay attention.

It’s time to give the majority vote back to the people — at least in May and November elections — who take the time to complete their ballots.