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City Club of Portland (Portland, Or.)

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Resolution in Opposition to Ballot Measure 60

Written and approved by the Research Board on August 14, 2008 and adopted by the Board of Governors on September 15, 2008.

State of Oregon Ballot Measure 60

TEACHER "CLASSROOM PERFORMANCE," NOT SENIORITY, DETERMINES PAY RAISES; "MOST QUALIFIED" TEACHERS RETAINED, REGARDLESS OF SENIORITY

RESULT OF "YES" VOTE: "Yes" vote makes teacher pay raises dependent on "classroom performance," without regard to seniority; specific subject training, teaching performance determine retention if lay-offs occur.

RESULT OF "NO" VOTE: "No" vote retains current laws allowing local school boards to pay and retain teachers by qualifications, including teaching competence, experience, educational attainments, licensure and seniority.

SUMMARY: Local public school district boards currently fix salaries, and retention and other contract terms of employment for teachers within their respective districts, subject to state laws regarding collective bargaining, merit, competence, licensure and the Accountability for Schools for the 21st Century Law. Measure eliminates seniority as a criterion for pay raises and requires that pay raises be based solely on a teacher's "classroom performance" (undefined); provides that if a school district reduces teaching staff, the district must retain the "most qualified" teacher, identified by "past classroom experience successfully teaching the specific subject" and academic training in that subject. Measure supersedes any conflicting law or policy, but applies only to teacher contract extensions and new contracts made after the effective date of measure. Other provisions.

The caption, and summary were certified by the attorney general.

PREAMBLE

In 2000, voters rejected an essentially similar measure—Measure 95. The intent of both Measure 95 and the current Measure 60 is to remove seniority as a component of teachers' pay and retention. City Club conducted a study of Measure 95 that forms the basis for this City Club resolution. The study is available on the City Club Website.

The City Club committee that studied Measure 95 determined that there had been no inclusive, collaborative process in proposing the change, that the measure did not articulate agreed-upon measurement standards, and that it did not provide the additional funding required to implement the new system. All of these were identified as key elements necessary for effective reform. Measure 95 would have predicated teachers' pay on "student learning, not seniority" and on "qualifications." The lack of definition as to what "student learning" and "qualifications" actually meant was another flaw in the measure. On October 27, 2000, on the recommendation of its study

committee, City Club ratified a “no” vote on the measure. Oregon voters said “no” to the measure as well, by a vote of 962,250 (65 percent) to 514,926 (35 percent).

The current Measure 60 differs from Measure 95 only in that it replaces students’ test scores as the gauge of teacher retention and pay with undefined terms such as “most qualified” teacher and “classroom performance.” These broad, undefined terms create some of the same problems and issues found with the former measure. In fact, we can apply most of the discussion in the study on Measure 95 to the current Measure 60. For example, like the older Measure 95, the current Measure 60:

- *Eliminates seniority as a determinant of teachers’ pay.*
- *Uses broad, indeterminate language; Measure 60 does not articulate what “classroom performance” is, nor how to conclude which teachers are “most qualified” and which are not.*
- *Restricts local school districts’ ability to decide or define individual compensation systems.*
- *Eliminates from future collective bargaining some current aspects of bargaining related to teacher compensation.*
- *Fails to provide the additional funds required to develop and administer new salary systems, including means to measure “classroom performance” objectively. (The official Estimate of Financial Impact on August 5, 2008 states: “The measure will require between \$30 million and \$72 million in additional state and local spending in the first school year. Thereafter the measure will require between \$20 million and \$60 million in additional state and local spending each year. The measure does not affect the amount of funds collected for state government, schools, or local governments.”)*

Though current compensation practices may be flawed, this measure does nothing to fix them. In fact, its lack of specifics would lead to further muddling of the compensation system and create additional strains on school budgets.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, City Club of Portland conducted research on a similar measure to eliminate seniority as a factor in teachers’ pay and, on October 27, 2000, the study committee recommended, and the Club ratified, a “no” vote on Measure 95;

WHEREAS, Measure 60, provides no inclusive, collaborative process in proposing the change, does not articulate agreed-upon measurement standards, and does not provide the additional funding required to implement the new system;

WHEREAS, while current compensation practices may be flawed, Measure 60 fails to address them in a way likely to be successful, and in fact, its lack of specifics would lead to further muddling of the compensation system and create additional strains on school budgets;

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED, that City Club of Portland shall publicly express opposition to Ballot Measure 60.