

WHY WE NEED INITIATIVE PETITION 41

Initiative Petition 41 is a constitutional amendment which dedicates 15% of lottery profits to public safety.

We have already submitted nearly 164,000 voters' signatures to the Secretary of State to place this on the ballot for November 2008. Since only about 110,000 verified signatures are required, we are confident that this constitutional amendment will go in front of the voters.

Funding Formula

This initiative takes 15% of lottery profits and places them in a Public Safety Fund.

Out of this Fund, one-half goes to fund "CSI: Oregon." The other half goes to counties for crime prevention, field work, and prosecution.

As of 2007, 15% of lottery profits is just under \$200 million per biennium.

Two of our biggest challenges in public safety are maintaining good funding for crime lab and forensics operations and developing better funding for local crime control activities.

"CSI: OREGON"

This initiative resolves the first challenge by dedicating half of the new Public Safety Fund to fully fund the criminal investigation, crime lab, and forensics operations of the Oregon State Police. This dedicated funding will allow the Oregon State Police to recruit and retain highly-qualified investigators and forensics experts to give Oregon one of the best criminal investigation operations in the United States.

This is extremely important because politicians have routinely cut back or threatened to cut back these very important programs when they are trying to justify tax increases. This has left questions as to continued funding for these operations, and funding shortfalls have led to major backlogs in investigation and forensics operations.

In these days of increasingly complex crimes involving identity theft, drug manufacturing and dealing, and forgery, not to mention sex crimes where DNA analysis is so critical, we need a first-class criminal investigation, forensics, and crime lab operation to ensure the convictions of the guilty and the clearing of the truly innocent. This entire operation is also a great benefit to local police departments and sheriff departments who turn to the state police for assistance in these complex matters.

LOCAL CRIME CONTROL

The second challenge - local control of crime - is met by the second part of this initiative. Half of the Fund goes to counties for crime prevention programs, additional investigation and field work by sheriffs' departments and for additional resources for prosecutors. With the limitations on property taxes and the obligation to fully fund their jails, counties have not been able to put the necessary dollars into prevention, investigation, and prosecution. This part of the initiative is a form of revenue sharing which guarantees ongoing support to the counties without meddling by the legislature.

There is a precise formula in the constitutional amendment which divides 30% of the county funds equally among the 36 counties and 70% by population among the counties. This assures that even low-population counties will have the necessary minimum flow of dollars to carry on effective programs.

WE CAN DO THIS WITHOUT CURRENT FUND CUTBACKS

Many ask: Won't this cut back on lottery funding for other activities? Because of the dramatic growth of the lottery, the answer is no. Lottery profits have grown an average of 23% for the last four biennia (two-year cycles). Projections are that they will grow at least this much in the first biennium after this measure is enacted. Accordingly, public safety will receive 15% of lottery dollars which will be at least at 123% of current profit levels. This assures currently-funded programs that there will be at least 6% growth in funds available to them even if the Public Safety Fund is established.

We make no judgment about whether or not we should have a lottery in this initiative. We simply assert that important public safety needs can be addressed so long as the lottery does exist.

THE PARKS, FISH, WILDLIFE PRECEDENT

Our best example is the 15% of lottery profits devoted to parks, fish, and wildlife. Ever since this citizen initiative was passed, we have seen a vast improvement in the establishment and maintenance of parks, as well as fish and wildlife programs. It was very important for parks to have a predictable source of funds since they often lost out in the funding contest known as the appropriations process.

Just as our parks have greatly improved with such funding, we will be able to greatly enhance public safety with similar funding.

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Initiative Petition 41