

Measure 3-272

Ballot Title

ORDINANCE CHANGES NUMBER OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS TO FIVE; NONPARTISAN COMMISSION

QUESTION: Shall the number of county commissioners be five, the county commission be nonpartisan and the Chair be elected by voters?

SUMMARY: This ordinance changes the number of Clackamas County commissioners to five and establishes the commissioner offices as nonpartisan offices.

The Board of County Commissioners is the governing body of Clackamas County. Currently, there are three commissioners. This ordinance would change the number of commissioners to five.

Currently, commissioners are elected through a partisan process, where commission candidates are affiliated with political parties or run as independent candidates. This ordinance requires commissioners to be selected on a nonpartisan basis, without political party affiliation. This ordinance maintains the existing system of all commissioners being elected on a county-wide basis.

This ordinance establishes one of the five positions as Chair of the Board of County Commissioners. The Chair will be elected by voters, not selected by other commissioners on a rotating basis, as is currently the case.

This ordinance generally maintains the current system of four-year terms for commissioners, but provides for a single two-year term for one commissioner to ensure that at least two commissioners are elected at each general election.

This ordinance provides that the Board of County Commissioners shall review the governance structure of the Board in the spring of 2011, and determine whether to propose to County electors changes in the governance structure of the Board, including, but not limited to, whether commissioners should serve on a full-time or part-time basis and whether commissioners should be elected County-wide or by district.

(This information furnished by Board of County Commissioners.)

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

This ordinance would change the number of Clackamas County commissioners to five commissioners, permit voters to elect the Chair of the commission and establish the commissioner offices as nonpartisan offices.

Clackamas County is governed by a Board of County Commissioners. Currently, the Board consists of three commissioners, all elected county-wide. This ordinance would change the number of commissioners to five commissioners. All five commissioners would be elected on a county-wide basis. Six other counties in Oregon have five-member boards of county commissioners; Clackamas County is the largest county (by population) in Oregon to still be governed by a three-member board.

Currently, Clackamas County commissioners are elected through a partisan nomination and election process, where candidates for county commissioner are affiliated with political parties or run as independent candidates. This ordinance would require candidates to be elected on a nonpartisan basis, without any affiliation with a political party.

This ordinance permits voters to directly elect the Chair of the Board of County Commissioners. The election of a candidate to Chair would be a County-wide election. Currently, all three existing commissioners are elected in County-wide elections, but one of the commissioners is then selected by the Board to be the Chair for a one-year period, on a rotating basis. This ordinance would permit voters to directly elect the Chair.

This ordinance generally maintains the current system of four-year terms for county commissioners. The ordinance provides for a single two-year term for one commissioner, from 2009-2011, to ensure that for elections held on or after 2010, at least two commissioners are elected at each general election.

Measure 3-272 Arguments

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR

As Clackamas County residents who represented you on the task force proposing this measure, **we urge a YES vote on Measure 3-272.**

We represent all facets of our shared community, from rural to urban, business interests to citizens groups, as well as Republican, Democrat and Independent voters. We believe this measure will help the County better serve each citizen through more representation, not bigger government.

A Diverse County, A Diverse Commission: Clackamas County is a microcosm of Oregon with rural, small town and urban needs. It includes descendants of settlers and newcomers following the modern day Oregon Trail. It is impossible for only three commissioners to represent such wide interests. Measure 3-272 provides more opportunity for diversity on the commission.

Financial Benefits for You: Three Commissioners can't be everywhere they need to be to represent us at the regional, state or federal table. This leads to missing out on the chance for money to support important projects. Measure 3-272 gives us more representatives and more voices in these important decisions.

Ending Partisan Politics: Measure 3-272 will help end partisan gridlock on the commission by making the commission non-partisan.

No Tax Increase: Measure 3-272 adds two new commissioners and **does not jeopardize** any county services or raise taxes. In the end, the benefits of greater county influence in regional, state and federal funding decisions will greatly outweigh the small additional cost.

Finally, the task force discussed whether the commission should be elected by districts. We recognize that many communities and areas of the county feel this is an important element. In the end, we decided to keep the commissioners elected countywide, but this measure includes a review the issue in four years of this issue.

Ernie Platt, Damascus	Chris Groener, Oregon City
Susan Trotter, Milwaukie	David Bugni, Estacada
Greg Chaimov, Milwaukie	Glen Boreth, Molalla
Verne Duncan, Clackamas	Ray Phelps, Lake Oswego
Linda Moraga, Clackamas	Cynthia Mohiuddin, Lake Oswego

(This information furnished by Greg Chaimov, Citizens for an Accountable County.)

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR

As Mayors of the cities within Clackamas County **we urge you to vote YES.**

This November, voters countywide will decide whether to expand the Clackamas County Commission from three commissioners to five.

In addition to adding two more commissioners, the measure gives you the power to elect the commission chair and makes all seats **non-partisan.**

Clackamas County continues to grow rapidly and is becoming a diverse county that includes rural, small town and suburban areas. By 2020 it is estimated that Clackamas County will have 700,000 residents, a doubling of our population from today.

The addition of two more County Commissioners is beneficial for several reasons, the measure:

1. Provides a better opportunity for all interests in the county to be represented;
2. Gives us clear leadership;
3. Allows us to better compete for regional, state and federal money for projects like transportation and public safety which is fierce. Building the relationships and developing the strategy needed to compete for this money takes time.

Together, we are unified in our support for Measure 3-272. The cities of Clackamas County work closely on a daily basis with the county to provide important services like roads, libraries and public safety to county citizens.

It is our opinion that Measure 3-272 will make Clackamas County better able to serve you well into the future.

Please join us in voting YES!

Tom Foster, Molalla	Rob Wheeler, Happy Valley
Judie Hammerstad, Lake Oswego	Robert J. Austin, Estacada
Norm King, West Linn	James Bernard, Milwaukie
Linda Malone, Sandy	Alice Norris, Oregon City
Charlotte Lehan, Wilsonville	

(This information furnished by Greg Chaimov, Citizens for an Accountable County.)

The printing of this argument does not constitute an endorsement by the County of Clackamas, nor does the county warrant the accuracy or truth of any statement made in the argument.

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Measure 3-272 Arguments

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR

**Your Chambers of Commerce
Urge a Yes Vote on Measure 3-272**

Measure 3-272 Benefits Business

The business community usually prefers smaller government. Not this time. Five county commissioners will be good for business. More attention to public safety. More attention to jobs. More attention to roads and bridges. All the things that lead to a vibrant business environment: safer communities, higher paying jobs, and better schools.

Measure 3-272 Gives More Power to Taxpayers

With only three commissioners, unelected staff—the bureaucrats—end up doing jobs that commissioners cannot get to. If taxpayers don't like how a bureaucrat is doing a job, there's nothing taxpayers can do. Replacing bureaucrats with elected commissioners means taxpayers wield the ultimate power: voting commissioners out of office if they don't perform well enough.

Measure 3-272 Ends Partisan Bickering

Measure 3-272 ends what historian James Robinson called "our great curse": Partisanship. Commissioners should only answer to the county's taxpayers—not to political parties.

**Measure 3-272 Makes Clackamas County Equal
to Multnomah and Washington Counties**

Multnomah and Washington Counties get more than their share of regional dollars. Why? More representation. Multnomah County and Washington County have five commissioners to go to bat for their taxpayers. For Clackamas County, it's like playing basketball three on five. With five commissioners, Clackamas County will finally get equal treatment.

**Measure 3-272 Brings Clackamas County
Out of the Horse and Buggy Age**

President Kennedy taught that "Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future." The government that worked for our grandparents' grandparents doesn't make any more sense today than the horse and buggy they traveled in. Changing times require a change in government. Clackamas County needs five commissioners.

Endorsed by:

Oregon City Chamber of Commerce
Sandy Area Chamber of Commerce
Wilsonville Chamber of Commerce

*(This information furnished by Wilda Parks, President/CEO,
North Clackamas County Chamber of Commerce.)*

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ARGUMENT IN OPPOSITION

As Republicans, we support the idea of increased representation within Clackamas County. However, this expensive ordinance has too many fatal flaws to support.

The cost for implementing this ordinance has only been recently evaluated and in a best-case scenario. The County estimates an increase in annual cost over \$250,000 without any increase in support staff which will obviously be required. Two additional support staff for the two new Commissioners would increase the annual cost over \$150,000. Additionally, they estimate an \$110,000 one-time cost for office renovation, etc. even without the increased staff. The recommendation to make four of the commissioners part time, at 1/2 salaries, (as in Washington County), was removed from the ordinance at the last minute without Commissioner comment and would have significantly reduced the cost for implementation.

Clackamas County Commissioners have always been a "partisan" election, yet the task force decided that citizens did not need to know which party a candidate supports. Even the Chair of the Clackamas County Democratic Party publicly testified in opposition to this issue.

Having five commissioners elected county wide, instead of in local districts, was considered, but not included in the final recommendation or ordinance, but rather "put off until a later date" per the Clackamas County website. We strongly support more localized, less expensive elections, that will make the commissioners more accountable to local citizens, and recommend that it be included in future discussions after this ordinance is defeated.

As Republicans, we believe that governments that are efficient, effective and close to the people, best serve their citizens. This ordinance fails each of these critical points. Citizens will pay for more government administration rather than for more roads, public safety, or health and human services. They will have less access to Commissioners, and special interests will have more. Elections will be shrouded behind the "cloak" of non-partisanship, yet controlled more by lobbyists.

We strongly encourage a **NO** vote.

(This information furnished by Tom Devaney, Clackamas County Republican Party.)

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Measure 3-272 Arguments

ARGUMENT IN OPPOSITION

What's it going to cost?

The proposed five member Board of County Commissioners doesn't come without a significant additional cost to fund the additional 2 full-time Commissioners plus the additional staff assistants they would require.

THE ANSWER: There are advantages to having a Board of five Commissioners. However, we don't need five full-time Commissioners. One full-time chairman and four part-time Commissioners is far more realistic and covers the work load.

Clackamas County Measure 3-272 will remove political identity of the candidates.

THE ANSWER: Candidates for political office should proudly wave their flag of political identity-Democrat, Republican, Independent or Other. You should know at first glance whether the candidate is liberal, conservative, or special interest.

Measure 3-272 would elect all candidates on a county-wide basis.

THE ANSWER: Clackamas County is extremely diverse, ranging from high density development to remote forest land. To assure representation of all areas, the County should be divided into four zones-2 urban, one rural, and one forest. The Chair should be elected county-wide.

We need change but this measure is not it.

VOTE NO on Clackamas County Measure 3-272.

(This information furnished by Ralph Hatley & Jesse Lott.)

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ARGUMENT IN OPPOSITION

Under the present workload it's time for a 5 member county commission, but there is no plan to pay for new people. Clackamas County's tax base is very limited. Will the sheriff be required to lay-off two deputies to pay for new commissioners? Now, the best whiner gets full time staff. Will you be required to lay-off two of your library staff to hire staff for the new commissioners?

There is no plan on whether it's a full time job for five commissioners or how much to pay them. I believe that up to half of their time should be volunteer-public service. The other time being paid. Clackamas County has 500 volunteers on boards and commissions, cities, schools, special district, etc. – all governed by volunteers. Legislators, when not in session are paid 1/4 that of commissioners.

Under the commissioners' plan they will study these two issues in a few years after they have hundreds of thousands of your tax dollars in their pockets.

There is no plan where present and future staff will be located. There are 5 fairly equal offices on the fourth floor for commissioners and administration. Two of these offices are presently occupied by the administrator and staff. There is no room for constructing other offices. One possibility would be to move the people and any new staff into other places on that floor. This would either mandate building new hallways and/or requiring departments to move to other buildings. To move a department to a new building will require 10's of thousands in architect fees, let alone hundreds of thousands in construction costs.

Defeat this measure, make the plan and bring this idea back next year when the details are fleshed out. Where are the forward thinkers? There could be four new commissioners elected next year and they need plans to run for election. Vote "No" on ordinance 3-272.

*(This information furnished by Dale Seale,
"The Cost-Effective Commissioner Initiative".)*

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