

Press Release

District Attorney's measure for highest salary in state is opposed by newly formed committee
Clatsop County, Or

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While District Attorneys the state over try to resolve their ongoing quest to raise their state paid salaries, appropriately, through state legislature the District Attorney of Clatsop County, Joshua Marquis, was instrumental in the formation of a committee to raise his own salary through a local measure, ignoring the state's obligation and passing the burden to local citizens to shoulder alone. Passage of Measure 4-123 would give the Clatsop County District Attorney a salary that, next year, would be greater than what the state pays to the prosecuting attorney of a county with a population of 400,000, thereby making Marquis the highest salaried District Attorney in Oregon. Clatsop County has a population of 35,000. Joshua Marquis is currently one of the vice presidents of the National District Attorney's Association having recently lost his presidential bid and is a frequent opinion contributor to the New York Times.

A group of local people in opposition to Measure 4-123 has formed, Citizens for Clatsop County Charter Integrity, to inform voters of the concerns and problems inherent in the measure.

The measure's multiple problems, ranging from its questionable ability to stand up to legal challenges, tying one state salary to another state salary, as well as the fact that the set salary does not have any responsibilities to the county associated with it, are making many citizens take a good hard look at what both the immediate cost the passage of the measure will be to the county as well as the measure's long term price tag.

"For example," explains Carrie Bartoldus, a spokesperson for the group, "if the state decides to raise circuit court judges' pay to \$130,000 but cut district attorneys' pay to \$50,000 local citizens will be responsible to pay the additional \$80,000 with no recourse or right to challenge the legislature's decision. Our county could end up paying all of the District Attorney's salary without any input on what that salary should be or what the job requirements should entail, no way to challenge the salary and no way to do long term budgeting for it. We will be forced to take on the state's financial obligation. What elected official will be next?"

Further concerns center on the fact that the Oregon State Law provides for how a District Attorney's salary is set. ORS8.790, 8.830, and 8.852 clearly state how a District Attorney's salary is determined and how it can be supplemented. A local measure to increase the salary is not a legal option according to these laws; laws which all prosecuting attorneys have sworn to uphold and abide by.

The constitutional aspect of the measure has caused many to be concerned as well, citing Article VI sec 10 of the Oregon State Constitution the group feels there will be immediate challenges by the state should the measure pass on November 6th.

For more information regarding Measure 4-123 and Citizens for Clatsop County Charter Integrity visit the website at www.charterintegrity.org email info@charterintegrity.org or call 503-468-3434.

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