

Written by Administrator
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Ballot measures supporting parks and tougher prison sentences got big support from Oregon voters, but implementing these citizen initiatives comes with a price tag.

Kevin Mannix, author of Measure 73, didn't mount a wide campaign for the measure but said voter support

shows they place a high value on public safety even during an economic crisis.

And Amanda Rich, executive director of Oregon Recreation and Park Association, said the strong voting for Measure 76 shows Oregonians view protecting parks and natural resources as a core value.

Measure 76, which drew 68 percent of votes, permanently dedicates 15 percent of Oregon Lottery proceeds for the maintenance of Oregon's parks and wildlife habitats. State officials estimate that those programs will receive about \$170 million over the next two years.

State leaders and Measure 76 backers agreed to a deal in August that would put more limits on the law, establishing a funding cap, a sunset provision and the ability for the Legislature to override the funding setup during an economic crisis. Parks and wildlife would share the impact of a funding crisis with schools, human services and public safety.

Those changes would have to be approved by voters in another election.

Measure 73 received 57 percent of votes. Enforcing the stiffer penalties for drunken drivers and sex offenders could require up to 600 additional prison beds. While state estimates show that costs could increase from \$18 million to \$30 million annually over five years, it's possible the Oregon Legislature could put off the financial hit.

In 2009, the Legislature delayed the implementation of Measure 57, a 2008 anti-crime proposal that increases prison terms for people convicted of certain drug and property crimes, citing a budget crisis.

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Voters soundly defeated the other two major citizen-backed initiatives. Measure 74, which would have created medical marijuana dispensaries, gained 42 percent of votes, and Measure 75, which would have approved the Oregon's first private casino in east Multnomah County, received 32 percent.

Anthony Johnson, co-author of the marijuana measure, said that despite the loss, the campaign gained more mainstream support than ever.

In California, Proposition 19, which would legalize marijuana, appeared to be losing.

Johnson said Oregon voters are likely to see a similar marijuana reform law on the ballot in 2012.

In the days just before the election, supporters and opponents of Measure 75 blanketed voters with mailings, television and newspaper ads.

Bruce Studer and Matt Rossman, the measures chief petitioners, said they wanted the casino and entertainment center to provide additional money for schools and other state services.

But debate raged about whether the casino would pull jobs and money from the Oregon Lottery.

Oregonians overwhelmingly supported Measure 70, a legislative referral that will expand the veteran home loan program and Measure 72, which allows Oregon to use general obligation bonds for certain projects above \$50,000.

Voters also supported annual meetings of the Oregon Legislature. Measure 71 puts limits on how often and for how long the Legislature can meet each year.

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"I think this puts the Legislature in a better position to govern and make things work," said Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem.

[-- Kim Melton](#)

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