

PROPERTY CRIME

Sunday, October 12, 2008

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The Oregonian

Our citizens are frustrated about property crime. They are sick and tired of being victimized by criminals who steal their identities and ruin their credit for years, steal their cars, and break into their homes and businesses. They want something done about these property criminals, and in many cases they want them locked up so they'll stop hurting our communities.

Oregonians are so frustrated that they are likely to pass both Measures 57 and 61 on the Nov. 4 ballot. The question is which deserves the most votes and will be enacted into law?

Prosecutors and other law enforcement professionals who work on the front lines of our communities crafted Measure 57. Kevin Mannix, a lawyer and former Republican state legislator, wrote Measure 61.

Our goal with Measure 57 is to ensure that we have the tools needed to make communities across Oregon safer. We know that old "80/20 rule": It's 20 percent of the criminals committing 80 percent of the crime. That's why Measure 57 cracks down on repeat property criminals and takes them off the street before they can do more harm. And Measure 57 also tightens the screws on first-time offenders, dramatically increasing sentences on a range of crimes, including theft against the elderly.

But Measure 57 is more than just tougher sentences; it aims to stop the revolving door of justice. With 85 percent of incarcerated property offenders in Oregon addicted to drugs or alcohol, but less than 15 percent receiving intensive treatment while in prison, it's no surprise that 49 percent go on to commit additional crimes when they are released. We can do better than that. That's why Measure 57 includes mandatory drug treatment.

Treatment is not a substitute for punishment, but by requiring addiction treatment in addition to tougher sentences, Measure 57 breaks the cycle of crime. And under Measure 57, those who refuse to complete treatment will get longer sentences until they get the message.

We also know that as public servants, it's our responsibility to spend your tax dollars wisely. That's why we think Measure 57 is the better way to fight property crime. Measure 57 will cost less than half the price of the other crime measure on the ballot because it will target the people who are actually threats to public safety: first-time offenders who are starting down a path to a lifetime of crime, and repeat offenders who have chosen that path.

Voters have a choice. Measure 57 toughens sentences for property crime, identity theft, crimes against the elderly and big-time drug trafficking while also working to stop repeat offenders and revolving-door justice. That's why district attorneys, sheriffs, police chiefs, police officers and

corrections officers from across the state are asking for your support and your vote for Measure 57: the better way to fight crime.

John Foote is the Clackamas County district attorney. Also contributing to this piece: John Trumbo, Umatilla County sheriff; Scott Campbell, corrections officer at the Columbia River Correctional Institution; Jim Harper, Oregon Police Chiefs for Safer Communities; Bob Miller, president, Oregon Council of Police Associations.