



HJR 26: Local Control Referral

Background

One of the challenges facing local voters is their inability to make decisions on service levels due to the limitations of Measures 5/50. Restrictions on voter choice are prohibiting communities from determining the appropriate levels of public safety, education, and other basic services. The current five-year restriction on operating levies limits efficiency and planning, while compression reduces the resources that local voters need to make decisions appropriate to their community.

2011 Legislative Session

The League is seeking legislative approval of a constitutional referral (**HJR 26**) to the voters that would:

- Allow local governments to extend the timeframe for any new voter approved local option operating levy from the current five years to 10 years;
- Provide that the limitations that result in compression not be applicable to these voter approved levies; and
- Allow districts to ask voters for a levy renewal at the eight-year mark.

City Message

- Voter choices at the local level are hampered by Measure 5/50 limitations.
- Compression is an arbitrary statewide restriction on choosing appropriate local service levels.
- Fully half of Oregon cities have now become mired in compression and unable to meet the demands placed on them to provide basic services even if the voters approve greater funding.
- Local voters should be able to vote without having their vote partially or fully set aside by Measure 5/50 compression limitations.
- Deciding appropriate police and other service levels should be made by local citizens.
- Increasing the timeframe for voter-approved local operating levies from 5 years to 10 years:
 - Provides more local control in deciding appropriate local service levels.
 - Strengthens a city's ability to engage in long term planning.
- Allowing local voters to reauthorize these levies after eight years:
 - Provides revenue predictability for local governments.
 - Provides tax bill predictability for tax payers.
- It's time to reform the "one-size-fits-all" arbitrary limits these measures superimposed on a statewide basis.