



## The Oregonian

### Like a bad penny, Sizemore is back

**It's disappointing that one man can game the system to set so much of the Nov. 4 agenda for all of Oregon**

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He failed spectacularly as a candidate for public office, and his business ventures flopped, too.

He reinvented himself as a prolific peddler of anti-government initiatives, but every one of them was rejected by voters, tossed out by the courts or rewritten by legislators.

Bill Sizemore would not top anyone's list of smashingly successful winners, but give the man credit for being persistent. After a six-year hiatus, he's back and in a big way, dominating Oregon's Nov. 4 ballot with five ballot measures -- three of them tired retreads of earlier Sizemore initiatives that voters rejected.

It's discouraging, frankly, that one man has set so much of the agenda for an Oregon election. He did it just as he has before, by manipulating the state's treasured initiative system in cynical ways never dreamed of by its founders 106 years ago.

How so? Sizemore discovered long ago there are wealthy ideologues willing to pay handsomely to have him turn Oregon's initiative system into their personal playground. In this election, the millionaires behind the Sizemore curtain are Loren Parks, a former Oregon medical device manufacturer now living in Nevada, and Richard Wendt, founder of Jeld-Wen, a Klamath Falls manufacturing company.

Sizemore's strategy is nothing like the grass-roots populist tool that Oregonians thought they had created more than a century ago. He used \$924,000 in contributions from Parks and a group sponsored by Wendt to hire people to collect the necessary signatures for his five anti-government measures.

That's nearly \$1 million, but it's actually cheap considering that it's all it took for three men to make the entire electorate have to deal with their issues. Now teachers, public employee unions and good-government groups will have to spend vast sums to fight the measures and protect valuable government services.

One of Sizemore's measures, for example, would make the full amount of an Oregonian's federal income tax deductible from state taxable income. It sounds great on the ballot, but it would deal a devastating blow to schools, public safety, transportation and other core services.

Sizemore refers to public employee unions as "enemies" and seems to relish forcing them to spend millions of dollars fighting his anti-tax measures over the past 14 years. The folly in that personal vendetta, however, is that it has energized Oregon labor unions to an unprecedented level while nearly putting some very bad laws on the books.

When Sizemore first came on the scene as a ballot initiative author, he sparked some divisive but useful debate in Oregon. His exploitation of the system quickly wore thin, however, and hit bottom in 2002 when a jury in a civil case found that he had engaged in a pattern of racketeering that involved forged signatures

and false financial reports.

For the ensuing six years, Oregonians got a welcome break from Sizemore's oily act. It's a shame to see it back.

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