

Happy New Year Oregon: new taxes, more regulation, more waste, no solutions

Polling indicates Oregon voters are most concerned about jobs, the economy, the environment, corruption in government, and transportation. In this environment a leader respecting the consent of the governed would pursue balanced approaches to policy. Not Kate “Petri Dish” Brown, Oregon’s far left governor. Kate has issued an edict that Oregon will serve as her “petri dish” so she can experiment with far left policies, whether we consent, or not.

Thanks to Petri Kate the state government is raising taxes in 2018 on new vehicle purchases, on people who buy certain kinds of bicycles, and on all workers in order to fund mass transit. Why would going green involve taxing bikes? Why tax rural workers who have no access to mass transit? Tax gas vehicles to fund electric cars?

Gov. Kate Brown is busy in the beaver state. The tax and spend mentality is alive and well in the Northwest. Her recent executive order mandates huge increases in electric car usage, market forces be damned.

She promises to pass [cap ‘n trade](#) legislation next year. Cap ‘n trade has been widely criticized because it is doubtful it will have much of an impact on reducing greenhouse gases, it is expensive for companies to participate, it is seen as a poor way to deal with pollution, and it is subject to fraud. When the government is involved in buying and selling permits and credits, watch out. It rarely ends well.

So, while Petri Kate obligates all taxpayers to fund abortion on demand through the 9th month, extending public benefits to illegal aliens as well so they too can kill their children with public financing, Oregon finances remain in chaos. Need we remind you of the [hundreds of millions of dollars wasted in attempts to implement ObamaCare in Oregon](#)?

As usual, a state run by Democrats is upside down. Oregon is running deficits approaching \$2 billion. While business leaders say they are willing to support some new taxes to help, first they insist on state government enacting real spending cuts and cost controls. Given the Democrat attitude toward cutting spending, expect impasse at this intersection.

Then there’s PERS, the Oregon Public Employee Retirement System, the stuff of legend for years.

Petri Kate commissioned a commission to recommend recommendations for dealing with the System shortfalls. Depending on the return on investment assumptions, the fund is behind \$25 to \$50 billion. This means the state promised retirees payments in future amounting to a king’s ransom, but the state does not have the money.

Recommendations to solve this colossal problem---reduce pension benefits, sell off assets, or raise taxes---fall on deaf ears. Somebody always objects to reform, be they politicians, bureaucrats, public employee unions, judges or retirees.

Legislative moves to reform the System have been struck down by the courts. (Many judges look to PERS for their retirement.) And since most legislators also rely on PERS (so long as they are re-elected repeatedly) how can we expect real reform to survive their scrutiny? However, State Representative Ron Noble, (R-McMinnville) will introduce legislation in 2018 to [take lawmakers and judges off PERS](#).

So, basically, while the rest of the country is seeing a return of manufacturing, lower taxes, less regulation, more employment and increasing prosperity, all with an eye on balanced environmental policy, Oregon the petri dish is chasing green unicorns, providing sanctuary for illegals, funding abortion, running deficits, blowing Al Gore's trumpet, tilting at windmills, pushing electric cars and cap 'n trade, and taxing bicycles.

After decades of Democrat domination delivering an anemic economy, healthcare on life support, an education system with no pulse, and policies promising heart failure, perhaps it's time for a Republican surgeon to restore balance and health?

Make ready to vote in May and November, 2018!