Recommendations:

Measure 107
Allows laws regulating political campaign finance
Vote YES

Measure 108
Raises taxes on cigarettes/cigars and imposes tax on vaping products to generate revenue for Medicaid/healthcare programs
Vote YES

Measure 109
Allows manufacture, delivery and administration of Psilocybin ("magic mushrooms") at supervised, licensed facilities
No Recommendation

Measure 110
Expands addiction treatment services; removes criminal penalties for majority of drug possession offenses
Vote YES

The voters’ ballot measure guide:
Why do we do it & how do we do it

This voters’ guide to the ballot measures for the 2020 Oregon general election is provided as an educational resource approved by the Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) board of directors, based on the recommendations of the Public Policy Advocacy Committee.

W e hope our discussion of the ballot measures will provide valuable insights for Oregon’s voters, especially for people whose faith is their ultimate guide. Foundational to our social principles is the belief that to be faithful means to “love God, and to love our neighbor as ourselves.” Christian minister William Sloan Coffin once stated, “In Christ’s sight, there are no insiders or outsiders, for we are finally of one nature and one flesh and one grief and one hope. In Christ’s sight, if we fail in love, we fail in all things else.”

Statement of Social Principles

EMO has adopted a Statement of Social Principles that guides our public policy work. In this statement, we recognize the value of religious involvement in civic affairs and the governmental process, and we identify core principles and areas of social concern.

We affirm the value of love, the respect of all life, and the dignity of every human being... In our public witness we embrace compassion and forgiveness in all relationships, non-violence, and working in constructive and creative ways to make a better world. We commit ourselves to a society in which all persons are free to live together in peace and harmony. We affirm an inclusive community for nurturing the shared life of humankind.

As we prayerfully engage in a discussion regarding each ballot measure, we consider arguments offered by both supporters and opponents of each measure, and we rely on the Scriptures, our social principles, our past positions on similar measures, and dialogue and deliberation in our Public Policy Advocacy Committee and among the EMO board of directors. We ask that you, also, prayerfully consider the wisdom of your own tradition and engage in a thoughtful process of discernment in exercising your civic duty to vote.

The EMO Statement of Social Principles identifies six key areas of social concern:
• Peace and Global Justice
• Human Rights and Religious Freedom
• Environmental Stewardship
• Economic Justice
• Family and Community Well-being
• Public Witness and the Common Good

In our discussions of the individual ballot measures found in this guide, we identify which area, or areas, of social concern relates to each measure. The complete statement of social principles can be found on our website at emoregon.org/advocacy-action.

The Catholic Archdiocese of Portland in Oregon abstained from EMO’s deliberations regarding the November ballot measures. The Archdiocese releases all public policy statements through the Oregon Catholic Conference.

The estimates of financial impact in this guide come from the Secretary of State.

Vote and make your voice count!

The Nov. 3, 2020, election is a statewide general election and will be vote by mail. Any Oregon resident who is at least 18 years old on Election Day is eligible to vote, but voter registration is required. Register online on the Oregon Secretary of State website at sos.oregon.gov/voting or turn in a voter registration card to any county election office within five calendar days after signing the card.

The last day to register is Oct. 13.

A registered voter who has moved, changed address or changed their name must re-register. This information may be updated through Election Day at a county election office or on the website listed above.

Ballots will begin to be mailed to voters on Oct. 14. Voters can use any official ballot drop site in Oregon to return their voted ballot during the 20-day voting period. Locate Oregon ballot drop boxes at sos.oregon.gov. Ballots may also be returned in person or by mail to a county election office by 8 p.m. on Nov. 3.

Our faith traditions call us to be thoughtful and active advocates for peace, social justice, human dignity and environmental stewardship. Through reflection on core principles, understanding of the political process, and knowledge of the issues, EMO seeks to empower people of faith and all Oregonians to fulfill their role in the democratic process.

EMO Statement of Social Principles
Measure 107

Legislative Referral / Constitutional Amendment — Allows Laws Regulating Political Campaign Finance

Summary & Analysis
Currently, Oregon's constitution prohibits the imposition of all laws that regulate campaign financing of state and local elections (federal elections in Oregon are subject to federal campaign regulations). Measure 107 (passed by the Legislature in 2019 as Senate Joint Resolution 10) would allow the legislature to allow the creation of laws regulating campaign contributions, expenditures, disclosure of campaign finances, disclosure of advertisements' funding sources.

The measure would also retroactively apply to campaign finance laws made by municipalities after Jan. 1, 2016, meaning it would apply to tobacco tax measures that have been passed by municipalities since 2016.

Individuals on both sides of the debate admit that the measure now likely bears less importance, due to the Oregon Supreme Court’s April 2021 ruling in favor of Multnomah County’s 2014 limits. This ruling reversed the Court’s 1997 decision that campaign contribution limits violated Oregon’s constitutional protection for freedom of speech — the only ruling of its kind in a state court in the nation. Oregon’s recent ruling effectively allows other municipalities and the state to enact campaign contribution limits. However, the measure is still uncertain in the future, pending the court’s ruling.

Supporters argue that Measure 107 is necessary to provide more comprehensive protections for campaign finance regulation than Oregon’s state Supreme Court ruling. In particular, supporters note that the court ruling may not apply to campaign disclosures and that Measure 107 would empower citizens to ensure that government can respond to changes in the market.

Supporters argue that even if Measure 107 fails, it will provide additional protection for campaign finance and other state laws that would otherwise be unconstitutional.

Supporters also argue that Measure 107 will help to achieve the human right of free speech, protected by both state and federal constitutions. Opponents believe that campaign finance reform is necessary to make campaign financing more transparent and accountable, and to prevent elected officials from being swayed by wealthy individuals and corporations.

Supporters point to concerns raised by the 2019 Oregonian/OregonLive series “Pulled by Money.” These issues include Oregon being one of the states with no contribution limits for state campaigns, corporations donating more per capita to Oregon lawmakers than to those in any other state, and Oregon's current system of campaign finance has left lawmakers susceptible to corruption that has resulted in environmentally destructive policies for decades.

The primary opponent of Measure 107 is the Liberty or Death Party of Oregon, which argues that allowing limits on campaign financing violates the constitutional right of free speech, protected by both state and federal constitutions. Opponents believe that campaign finance regulations suppress political speech by placing limits on how much monetary support individuals and groups can provide to candidates. They also argue that political declarations suppress by preventing individuals from anonymously voicing potentially unpopular opinions.

Financial Impact
The financial impact is indeterminate.

EMO Recommendation
Vote “YES” on Measure 107, based on EMO social principles of Public Welfare & the Common Good and Environmental Stewardship.

Economical Ministries of Oregon rejects the notion that campaign contributions partake in speech. We recognize that Oregon’s lack of campaign finance regulations reinforces unjust inequalities and potentially undermines lawmakers’ ability to fairly regulate the economy in a way that protects the wellbeing of everyday Oregonians. As people of faith, we are called — as stated in EMO’s Social Principles — to “seek a government and social order that is founded on principles of human dignity and political equality.” We view Measure 107 as a crucial opportunity to bring about such a social order, while acting upon EMO’s longstanding belief “that campaign finance reform is an ethical imperative to ensure fairness and equal representation of all people in society.” Economical Ministries of Oregon also shares environmental advocates’ concerns that Oregon’s lack of state-level campaign finance regulation has had a detrimental impact on the natural world. Our shared faith and Social Principles recognize our moral imperative “to eliminate environmental injustice and work to heal and protect creation for future generations.” EMO believes that in making the political voices of all Oregonians more equal, Measure 107 will encourage our lawmakers to enact environmental regulations that prioritize protecting creation over promoting profit.

Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an everflowing stream. — Amos 5:24

Measure 108

Legislative Referral — Raises Taxes on Cigarettes/Cigars and Imposes Tax on Vaping Products; Generate Revenue for Medicaid / Healthcare Programs

Summary & Analysis
The Oregon Legislature referred this measure to the voters based on the Legislature’s House Bill 2270 (2019) that seeks to reduce the health impacts of tobacco and raise needed revenue for Oregonians. Campaign groups by: 

- Increasing existing state taxes on cigarettes from $1.33 per pack (ranked 37th in the U.S.) to $3.33 per pack (would be ranked 3rd)
- Raising the existing tax cap on cigars from $0.50 per cigar to $1 per cigar
- Imposing a new tax on vaping products, such as e-cigarettes, which would be taxed at 65 percent of their wholesale price.

Ninety percent of the revenue generated from the measure will help fund Oregon’s Medicaid program, the Oregon Health Plan (OHP), which currently serves almost 1 million Oregonians. The remaining 10 percent of revenue will fund what public health programs — culturally specific providers, Indigenous healthcare and tobacco cessation programs working to reduce tobacco usage among Oregon’s target communities.

Prior to the 2019 court ruling, supporters portrayed the measure as a “no-brainer” for Oregonians. As people of faith, we are called upon to work for a government and social order that is founded on principles of human dignity and political equality.

EMO Recommendation

Economical Ministries of Oregon recognizes that the funding mechanism in this measure is neither perfect nor politically ideal. However, we stand with the other Oregonians that this measure provides the only immediate option for ensuring the stability of OHP through an unprecedented health crisis that is intensifying Oregonians’ need for both medical care and government-funded health care.

Opponents of the measure, primarily from the local and national business community, argue that it will have detrimental economic effects for businesses and every Oregonian. These opponents point to research showing that taxes produce long-term savings for low-income communities by leading more people to quit smoking and reducing tobacco-related illnesses, by reducing often significant healthcare costs to treat tobacco-related illnesses. Opponents also argue that the measure will benefit low-income Oregonians by stabilizing funding for Medicaid.

Learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow. — Isaiah 1:17

Measure 109

Statutory Initiative — Allows Manufacture, Delivery, Administration of Psilocybin at Supervised, Licensed Facilities

Summary & Analysis
Currently, Oregonians are prohibited from using psilocybin, the active ingredient in what is commonly known as “magic mushrooms.” After initial research and trials, the FDA declared psilocybin breakthrough therapy status, allowing for more extensive research and trials to be done around its effects and benefits for a range of mental health issues, such as major depressive disorder. Psilocybin has been decriminalized in Oakland, Calif., Denver, Colo. and Santa Cruz, Calif. Oregon would be the fourth state to have a therapeutic model of psilocybin use implemented.

Proponents cite data that shows Oregon as the state with the highest rate of mental health issues in the country. They cite also initial studies that have shown psilocybin having a positive impact on individuals dealing with such health issues as major depressive disorder. The primary sponsor of this measure is Measure 109 and Dr. Bronson’s (a company that produces personal care products). This proponent argues that the mental health issues facing individuals can be made available to Oregonians. They also argue that this measure will closely regulate every step of the psilocybin process in terms of testing and administration and usage.

There is no organized opposition to this measure as of this writing.

Financial Impact
There is no financial impact related to Measure 109.

EMO Recommendation
EMO makes “No Recommendation” on Measure 109.

Although much of the research around psilocybin’s mental health benefits shows that it is beneficial, this is an area in which we see a need for more conclusive studies from the medical and scientific communities as a whole. Mental health and public health are not issues that EMO takes lightly. There are likely many Oregonians who would benefit from Measure 109, given the high rates of mental illness in Oregon. However, EMO has concluded that it is not our place to make scientific or medical recommendations regarding psilocybin.

Download EMO’s 2020 Voters Guide
Since 1978, Economical Ministries of Oregon (EMO) has produced high-quality ballot measure guides with recommendations from a faith-based perspective. This guide is an informative tool used by many, including non-religious groups.

The 2020 Voters’ Guide to Oregon Ballot Measures is available as a free PDF download at EMOregon.org/advocacy-action.
Measure 110
Statutory Initiative — Expands Addiction Treatment Services; Removes Criminal Penalties for Majority of Drug Possession Offenses

Summary & Analysis
Measure 110 would increase access to addiction treatment services and decriminalize the possession of most drugs in Oregon. The measure would expand existing addiction services and establish a statewide network of Addiction Recovery Centers (ARC) to assess the needs of people who use drugs and link them to services. Measure 110 ensures that ARCs are spread across the state to provide access to rural Oregonians in areas where few resources currently exist. An oversight and accountability council—comprised of addiction treatment and recovery experts, as well as people from communities disproportionately affected by addiction and our current model of policing drug-related offenses—would oversee the ARC.

Measure 110 would also make Oregon the first state to decriminalize low-level possession of most drugs. The measure would remove criminal penalties for personal, non-commercial possession of drugs listed as Schedule I, II, III or IV—the four classifications of drugs deemed by the federal government as the most likely to be abused. This means Measure 110 would decriminalize—but not legalize—possession of drugs like heroin, methamphetamine and Ecstasy. Possession of these substances would be reclassified from a Class A misdemeanor offence to a Class E violation resulting in a $100 fine.

Additionally, the measure encourages violators to pursue addiction treatment by referring them to their local Addiction Recovery Center and waiving their fine if they approach the ARC for a consultation.

Supporters believe that Measure 110 represents a more robust, compassionate and effective response to Oregon’s addiction crisis. They argue that addiction is a health care issue that requires a health care response, rather than a criminal justice response more effective in helping Oregonians recover from addiction, by pointing to a large body of research showing that treatment is most successful when sought voluntarily.

They also claim that Measure 110 will make our addiction response more effective in helping Oregonians recover from addiction, by pointing to a large body of research showing that treatment is most successful when sought voluntarily.

Supporters also argue that Measure 110 will remove unfairly harsh punishments for minor, nonviolent drug offenses that disproportionately burden communities of color. Measure 110 would make it impossible for Oregonians to be arrested and spend time in jail for cases in which low-level drug possession is the most serious offense. Currently, almost 9,000 Oregonians are arrested in such cases each year and roughly half of their cases result in convictions.

Troublingly, Black Oregonians are over three times more likely than White Oregonians to be arrested for drug possession, despite similar rates of drug use. These disproportionate arrest rates not only reflect but also reinforce structural racism through the long-term harm that criminal records inflict on people’s ability to obtain jobs, work promotions, rental housing, student loans, professional licenses and credit cards.

Opponents of Measure 110—many of whom have law enforcement backgrounds—take issue with the measure’s decriminalization components. They argue that decriminalizing most drugs will lead to increased rates of drug use and crime by removing an important legal deterrent. Opponents also argue that removing decriminalization will make it less likely that some individuals struggling with addiction receive treatment, because they will no longer be compelled to do so by courts.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon does not share either of these fears, because they are not supported by research. In fact, research indicates that criminalization of drug possession does not reduce other types of crime (such as violent crimes or those involving property) and may actually increase their prevalence. Research also suggests that compulsory treatment may be less likely than voluntary treatment to prevent criminal recidivism and drug use.

Financial Impact
Treatment expansion would be funded by existing revenue—likely around $100 million annually—from Oregon’s marijuana tax.

EMO Recommendation
Vote “YES” on Measure 110, based on EMO social principles of Human Rights and Religious Freedom, Family & Community Well-being, and Public Witness & the Common Good.

As members of the Oregon faith community, we affirm the rights of all people to health care and our responsibility “to promote … the overall health and economic stability of families and communities.” Unfortunately, this right is not ensured for thousands of Oregonians suffering from alcohol and drug addiction. Currently, only 1 in 10 Oregonians who are struggling with addiction are able to access the treatment that they need. Measure 110 provides Oregon with the opportunity to provide much-needed support and services to these neighbors in our communities.

Now more than ever, it is also clear that our country has a moral imperative to reform our criminal justice system and reduce the trauma it inflicts on communities of color. Our shared faith and Social Principles affirm every person’s right to not only health care but also “an equitable system of justice.”

Despite the best intentions of many law enforcement officials, systemic racism continues to make Oregon’s compulsory drug response iniquitous. Measure 110 represents an important step towards a more just system that respects the inherent dignity of all people and treats all Oregonians equally and fairly.

Virtual Ballot Measure Forums
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon’s ballot measure forums are going virtual.

To schedule a virtual ballot measure forum with our advocacy team for your faith community or organization, please contact Olivia Asato, EMO public policy associate, at oasato@emoregon.org.

A current schedule of virtual Ballot Measure Forums is posted on EMO’s website at EMOregon.org/advocacy-action.

And what does the Lord require of you … but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.
—Micah 6:8

Fall 2020 Voters’ Guide to the Oregon Ballot Measures
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