

The Bulletin

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Editorial: Keep groceries tax free

Food sold at the grocery store is not taxed in Oregon. And grocers have done Oregonians a favor by taking the first step to put an initiative on the ballot to keep it that way. The proposal aimed for the November 2018 ballot would keep groceries tax-free. It would include raw food and prepared food. Alcoholic beverages, marijuana products or tobacco products could be taxed.

The proposal isn't just about banning a sales tax on food. It includes bans on "a gross receipts tax, commercial activity tax, value-added tax, excise tax, privilege tax, and any other similar tax on the sale of groceries." There's more information at www.yeskeepourgroceriestaxfree.com.

Who's behind this? The Northwest Grocery Association.

Grocers were one of the major opponents of Measure 97, a gross receipts tax, that voters rightly rejected in 2016. And some Democratic legislators tried again to implement a gross receipts tax or a similar privilege tax this session. The Oregon Education Association, the state teachers' union, has looked at a modified version of Measure 97 to put on the 2018 ballot.

A gross receipts tax is flawed for a number of reasons. For instance, it taxes businesses even if they don't make a profit. It's wrong to tax necessities like food and health care. Proposals in Oregon have aimed to do both.

The Democrats who control Oregon government proved this past legislative session that they are not very thoughtful about controlling government spending and are very eager to increase government taxes. Oregonians should send them a message that food should not be taxed.