

KATU.com - News - Portland, Oregon

[Print this article](#)

Measure 67 debate was 'in the bag' at City Club

by Melica Johnson KATU News and KATU.com Staff

Originally printed at <http://www.katu.com/news/local/81059312.html>

PORTLAND, Ore. – Steve Novick, a supporter of the Legislature’s tax increases for higher wage earners and corporations, used M&M’s to make his point Friday at a Portland City Club debate about how little the Legislature-passed tax increases would impact corporations.

“Let me tell you what one-tenth of one percent is: I have here 17 and a half bags of M&M’s,” he said holding up a QFC grocery bag to the audience and then dumping the 17 and a half bags on the floor. “I throw one M&M at Pat (McCormick, his debate opponent) and that’s one-tenth of one percent.”

Many in the audience laughed, but McCormick – of Oregonians Against Job Killing Taxes – said businesses had been willing to strike a deal over the past Legislative session. He said they were willing to temporarily raise corporate minimum taxes to \$300 a year. However, McCormick said state lawmakers ignored their plan and pushed for the permanent increase.

“We were prepared to provide short-term funding to help bridge this current (economic) crisis,” he said.

The debate comes more than two weeks before Oregon voters will decide the fate of the Oregon Legislature’s tax increases with their votes on Measures 66 and 67.

Measure 66 will increase taxes on household income above \$250,000 and \$125,000 for individual filers. Measure 67 will increase the \$10 corporate minimum tax to \$150. Profits on some corporations will also see an increase in their tax rates and some filing fees will increase.

Novick took aim at the heart of the opposition’s campaign that argued tax increases in a recession would kill jobs.

“I don’t know where to start. First of all, you should never raise taxes during a recession, but it would’ve been OK to raise taxes if it was only during a recession?” he said referring to McCormick’s argument that corporations were willing to be taxed temporarily.

The campaign, “Oregonians Against Job Killing Taxes”, said the roughly two percent of

Oregonian's the personal income tax hike would affect are already paying for a third of the state's public services.

"They're paying for one in three teachers, one in three police officers, one in three prison guards," said McCormick.

He said the wealthy will move out of state to avoid paying higher taxes and cross over the bridge to Clark County, Wash. which is "why *The Columbian* (newspaper), when these taxes were passed, thanked the Oregon Legislature for the best economic development tool they had."

Novick acknowledged a few wealthy people leave but said those who stay will get better services.

"They benefit from the existence of an education system, for the existence of a public safety system that ensures people don't go out and steal their stuff," Novick said to the laughter from the audience.