

Association of Oregon Counties



Governance Committee Principles

General personnel issues:

- AOC generally follows the lead of the private sector employer associations in not supporting proposals that will increase personnel costs. AOC may oppose selected general personnel issues.
- When a general employment issue only applies to the public sector, including counties, AOC generally does not support proposals that will increase county personnel costs.

PERS issues:

- AOC supports fair retirement benefits for county employees at a stable, sustainable, affordable cost to county government.
- AOC is generally opposed to proposals that:
 - Increase employer costs;
 - Expand the definition of those eligible for police/fire benefits;
 - Expand opportunities for early retirement; and/or
 - Expand opportunities for PERS retirees to work for PERS participating employers.

Specific proposals may be reviewed to see if a general policy exception is warranted.

Prevailing wage on public contracts:

- AOC is neutral regarding the requirement for prevailing wages on public works projects.
- AOC supports clarity in laws and administrative rules regarding applicability of prevailing wages on public improvement projects.
- AOC is opposed to all requirements that make it harder for counties to administer the provisions of the prevailing wage laws.
- AOC is opposed to any provisions that would make counties the enforcement agent for prevailing wage laws.

Tax policy issues:

- There are significant distinctions among the financial situations of counties, and no single solution to address the challenges facing county finance. A policy proposal must positively address a fiscal challenge facing counties, while minimizing negative consequences to particular counties.
- A proposal must reasonably respect the different service priorities of the citizens of each county and minimize reduction of policymaking authority of the county governing body.
- To the extent practicable, a proposal shall:
 - Be clear and understandable;
 - Provide revenues that are stable and adequate enough to meet its intent;
 - Be fair to county taxpayers;
 - Minimize preventable social, economic and environmental costs; and
 - Have a rational linkage between the revenue source and its dedicated function, if revenue from a tax or fee is dedicated to a specific function.
- A proposal must avoid erosion of the counties' ability to raise their own local revenues to provide local service levels expected by citizens, including:
 - No unfounded mandates from shifts in service of administrative responsibility;
 - No preemption of local revenue authority unless an alternative source of revenue is provided;
 - Funding of legislatively granted exemptions from local revenue sources; and
 - Funding by the state for state-authorized economic development incentives implemented by a county. For example, enterprise zones forgive property taxes to a county for a period, while providing an immediate incentive for enhancing income taxes to the state. State funding of these types of incentives would stimulate more active implementation of them.