



16th Annual Oregon Taxpayer Awards



Steve Buckstien

Thomas Jefferson Award

Steve Buckstien (right) won our 16th annual Thomas Jefferson Award. He is the co-founder of Cascade Policy Institute, helped pass Oregon's landmark Charter School laws in 1999, founded the Children's Scholarship Fund, and passed the Right to Try Bill in 2015 which gives terminally ill patients access to potentially life-saving treatments.



Portland Mayor

Worst Politician of the Year Award

Tax credits for criminals: Portland Mayor Charlie Hales tried to give \$2,500 in tax credits to businesses who hired felons. He passed a law giving criminals extra rights that prevent business owners from asking about an applicants' criminal history until after the job has been offered.⁽¹⁾

Most Ironic tax: Hales voted for a quarter billion housing construction tax to pay for "affordable" housing. Hales also pushed a Carbon Tax, Street Tax, Gas Tax, Pot Tax, Business Tax and a \$25,000 Demolition Tax on people who rebuild their home.

Homeless experiment runs amok: Hales rolled back rules against homeless camping, which created an outpouring of "Halesville" homeless encampments across the city. The Halesville camps created a public safety disaster including a spike in police calls, trespassing violations, mounting garbage and so many fire hazards that firefighters had to respond to one new fire alarm call every single day.⁽²⁾
(see also Golden Schnoz Award)



Cash Chomping Goats & Invisible Employees Government Waste Award

Instead of paying \$5,000 for plant control at Minto Brown Island Park, park officials decided to hire 75 goats for a total cost of \$20,000. It cost more because the park had to hire humans to not only watch the goats but also finish the goats job of clearing the bramble which the goats left behind.⁽³⁾

Over \$300 million of tax dollars have been going to government agencies to fund completely vacant state employee positions. Taxpayers are paying for 3,500 vacant employees, which is 11% of the total workforce. Rep. Gene Whisnant's 2014 bill to stop the waste was blocked from passing.⁽⁴⁾

Drive-Thru Ban

Golden Schnoz Award

Government sticking its nose where it doesn't belong

Portland Mayor Charlie Hales (see Worst Politician of the Year Award) tried to ban drive-thru restaurants in the center of the city. His staff said "Drive-thru's are a poor use of land." This comes from the same Mayor whose \$15 million "path to nowhere" was 150% over-budget, 6-years delayed and scandalized by secret tax giveaways hidden from the public. And they have the nerve to tell us that drive-thru's are a "poor use of land"! ⁽⁵⁾

\$6 Million DEQ Paperwork Error Bureaucratic Bungler Award

Dept. of Environmental Quality (DEQ) promised a landowner that they would spend millions to clean up his heavily polluted land in exchange for proceeds on the sale of his land. After spending \$6.5 million to clean up the property and getting it ready to sell, DEQ was shocked to learn that the ownership of the land was transferred from the owner to the County for failure to pay taxes. DEQ never bothered to take the time to secure a basic lien on the land during the original paperwork. DEQ lost \$6 million. ⁽⁶⁾

Source (1) Weekly Standard 2/2/15, (2) KGW 5/6/16, (3) Statesman Journal 2/29/16, (4) Oregonian 3/3/11, (5) Willamette Week 4/27/16 & Oregonian 2/11/16 (6) Willamette Week 3/2/16

Oregon is the #1 TAX & SPEND STATE in the West

Oregon state and local governments spend more per capita than our neighbors and even 39 other states!

