

A Very Short Cautionary Tale
Or
What Goes Around Comes Around

Once upon a time in the near future in 2022, a group of progressive citizens throughout Jackson County, but mainly in Ashland, joined together and qualified a bond measure to fund a much-needed improvement to the addiction, mental health and human services here in Jackson County. In 2020, the Jail Bond, which had a significant human services component, had failed to even come to a vote in Jackson County due to Ashland City Councilors voting to not allow Ashland to join the service district. And thus, human services throughout the county were in dire straits by 2022.

The special services district that needed to be formed to set up the taxing authority for this new bond required the consent of most of the city councils in Jackson County to put it on the ballot. Even though it was expensive, the proponents felt that if they could just get it on the ballot it would have widespread support with a good chance of passing.

However, several of the more conservative communities in Jackson County had significant “law and order” constituencies that opposed such expensive coddling of addicts, the shiftless and the homeless without a concomitant new jail as part of the package. These communities pushed hard for their city councils to vote the measure down and not even let it come to a vote of the people. They felt it was a flawed proposal and shouldn’t even see the light of day!

These more conservative communities also vividly recalled in 2020 when the Ashland City Council voted to not allow a district to form to allow all voters in the county to vote on the Jail Bond. They were still raw from that memory where they felt disenfranchised by Ashland’s “exceptionalistic” attitude toward the rest of the county.

As a result in the spring of 2022, Central Point, Eagle Point and Rogue River city councils torpedoed the new bond measure and no one lived happily ever after. -- *The End*

While I would probably not support the Jail Bond in its present form, I feel strongly that to prevent the citizens of Jackson County the chance to vote on this measure is undemocratic. Let those who oppose this Jail Bond fight it on the fields of electoral debate, civilized discourse and factual presentation. It should not be still-born and voters not allowed to exercise their basic right to vote.

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