

BALLOT MEASURE 34-345

This ballot measure caption is Measure 34-345 titled “Replacement Levy to Support Countywide Library Services.”

Question posed:

“Shall Washington County support library services countywide by levying 37 cents per \$1,000 assessed value for five years, beginning in 2026? This measure may cause property taxes to increase more than three percent.”

If levy is passed it will be payable on taxes on property or property ownership that are not subject to the limits of section 11 and 11b, Article XI, of the Oregon Constitution.

Here’s a description:

There is a current levy in place that is set to expire in June 2026. According to the Washington Country Cooperative Library Services website, about 45% of funding for WCCLS comes from this local option levy. Current levy is \$0.22 per \$1000 of assessed value on property. The proposed levy will be an increase to \$0.37 per \$1000 of assessed value.

Arguments in favor:

WCCLS is the primary source of funding for public libraries in our county. This covers systems and support to 16 full service libraries. Current funding cannot maintain the level of service that is being provided now.

Reading and learning support for kids and teens which includes in person events, homework help, access to computers and wi-fi.

Resources for jobseekers as this levy would allow libraries to continue to provide computers, resources and instruction for job and career development.

Last year, according to the WCCLS website, there were over 2.4 million visits to member libraries with over 7.2 million checkouts. This saves users \$140 million by borrowing and not purchasing materials.

Arguments against:

- The cost of the tax at a time when people feel pressured financially by high food prices may be difficult for voters.

Factors the committee considered:

- If passed, Measure 34-345 would authorize an increase in property taxes.
- The proposed measure would cost property owners \$0.37 per \$1,000 of assessed property value. The tax would continue from July 2026 through June 2031.
- The owner of a home assessed at \$348,600 would pay approximately \$129 per year, or \$10.75 per month.
- The proposed measure would raise \$188,915,688 between July 2026 and June 2031.
- No organized opposition was found.
- The WashCo Dems platform places a high value on education. Libraries provide educational resources and assistance to students of all ages and abilities. Purchases of books, annual reading summer programs, tutoring services, online homework help are all funded with this levy.
- The WashCo Dems also place a value on infrastructure which our public libraries represent in providing internet access, computer access and meeting space for the community as well as cooling and warming areas for members of our community experiencing houselessness or just in need of this assistance.
- Measures/Bonds/Levies Ad Hoc Endorsement Committee recommends < >

LINKS:

<https://www.wccls.org/levy>

https://www.oregonlegislature.gov/bills_laws/Pages/OrConst.aspx

(see Article XI, section 11 and 11b.)

Submitted by Suze Engbretson

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