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## Josephine (JO) County (CO) Justice System (JS) & Public Safety Services (PSS)

**JO CO JS&PSS Tax Levies** The 2012 expiration of federal funding in JO CO, used mostly for public safety services, resulted in JO CO proposing two tax levies as solutions. They both failed.

1. May 2012 JO CO-wide Measure 17 - 43, Criminal Justice System Operations Four Year Local Option Tax (i.e., \$1.99 per \$1,000 of assessed value), failed 57 - 43 percent.
2. May 2013 JO CO-wide Measure 17 - 49, Criminal Justice and Public Safety Three Year Local Option Tax (i.e., \$1.48 per \$1,000 of assessed value), failed 51 - 49 percent.

**Why Did The Levies Fail?** Many believe that the 2013 “nay” vote was not necessarily a vote of whether citizens supported JS&PSS, but more a view of government and a vote on the specific measure, especially its unknowns. Trust, demographics, and the unknowns of the proposed levy were critical.

- Trust & Ownership By Citizens
- Demographics
- Inadequate Information & Analysis

**Trust & Ownership By Citizens** How does government develop trust and ownership by it citizens for a tax like Measure 17 - 49?

We think everyone would agree that trust between the people and the government must flow both ways, or it is ineffective.

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## Justice System Exploratory Committee

First, the serves needed must be clearly defined, and assets to support the need must be available. For example, the Continental Congress knew it needed an army and created one June 1775. Washington’s 11,000 army was in winter quarters at Valley Forge 1777 - 78. That deaths in camp numbered in the thousands. The reason was that the Congress had no power to tax and had denied Washington’s request for money to supply the army. Other years \$ was found.

Somewhere is the best compromise. Unfortunately, like many “golden mean” situations, every-one has a different idea as to the standards for identifying this “sweet spot.”

For many voting was simple. A large number of neighbors are on low fixed incomes and they felt they could not afford the tax. For example, JO CO’s 2012 population was 82,930. 18.8 %, or 14,927 persons were below the poverty level (the state is 14.8%).

For others the unknowns of 17 - 49 were overwhelming. The public did not know how “adequate” safety was defined or where taxes would go. How many jail beds , if any, would be available? What %, if any, would the sheriff receive for rural patrols?

Others felt that the county beared significant responsibility for its decline. In the more than two decades since changes in forest policy crippled the economies in timber-dependent counties, too much time had been spent doing too little to find solutions. Why tax yourself when the government had proved it could not wisely spend your money?

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## Trust & Ownership By Citizens

Many felt that rural patrols were being slighted to gain support for the levies. Over the years rural neighbors had rarely seen rural patrols in their neighborhood and still don’t. Why vote for more taxes?

Others voted against those levies because they felt that local law enforcement was over-reaching with its harassment of people in the medical marijuana program. The power of the purse was to be able to control those armed forces among them and not let them get out of control. Losing funds should force the law to enforce actual crime instead of chasing pot plants that were already licensed.

With mutual trust, much can be done, both on the personal advancement and on the practical use side of things. With mutual trust, you can feel certain that they will do what you expect of them, and they can have the same expectation of you. Mutual trust does not happen quickly as it requires mutual knowledge by all participants.

How to secure, cultivate, seek, more trust between the citizens and the government ? Should a government be trusted that does not seem to trust its citizens voting correctly? After Measure 17 - 43 failed the county proposed Measure 17 - 49. After it failed the county appears to be posed for another round May 2014.

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1. Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society (HNA&HS). July 9, 2013. *Justice System Exploratory Committee*. Hugo, OR.

2. Hugo Neighborhood Association. July 9, 2013. *All Voters & Votes Are Legitimate*. Hugo, OR.

3. OSU

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## Exploratory Committee's Mission

**Mission** An independent Justice System and Public Safety Services Exploratory Committee (*Exploratory Committee*) to investigate the JO CO Justice System & Public Safety Services (JS&PSS) issue was formed under the leadership of the Hugo Neighborhood Association and Historical Society (HNA&HS).

Big picture ideas for the exploratory effort include the following.

1. Identifying the JS&PSS issue.
2. Identifying the JS&PSS sub-issues for research and analysis.
3. Identifying a range in level of services
4. Identifying a range of costs for services.
5. Identifying revenues for services.

The ultimate goal is an adequate justice system and public safety services. Is it possible to have a higher level of service for a lower cost? The purpose of the *Exploratory Committee* is to gather information adequate enough to understand the JS&PSS issues. This includes educational outreach efforts.

The *Exploratory Committee's* purpose is limited to investigating and researching the JS&PSS issues. It will not make evaluations of right or wrong, nor make recommendations on how to vote.

The contents of this brochure are expressions of the opinions and beliefs of those that contribute based on their thoughts and experiences. Hopefully, their efforts will assist the public toward informed decision-making.

- Donations Are Not Tax Deductible -

Edited by Mike Walker, Member, Exploratory Committee

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### *Justice System Exploratory Committee*

<http://www.hugoneighborhood.org/justicesystemexploratorycommittee.htm>

### Hugo Neighborhood Association & Historical Society

<http://www.hugoneighborhood.org/>

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# TRUST ME, I UNDERSTAND

Brochure IIID.12.2.2  
Justice System & Public Safety Services Series

## Trust & Ownership

**Very Draft July 12, 2013**

*Hugo Justice System Exploratory Committee*