

Letters to the editor

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Portland Tribune

Support Clackamas County's children's levy

As business leaders, we understand the costs of overcoming unforeseen obstacles, especially if they could have been avoided in the first place. The same logic applies to violence, abuse and neglect. Data shows that dealing with the aftermath of trauma is much more costly than preventing it in the first place. We also know that short-term investments are really only a band-aid for long term problems.

That's why even in an economic downturn, that has come about in the wake of a crippling global pandemic and devastating wildfires, we support the Clackamas Children's Safety Levy (Measure 3-564) — a measure that will double the amount of trauma services provided to the county's children and youth. This includes medical assessments and services for children experiencing abuse, emergency shelter, legal advocacy, parenting support, truancy prevention, residential treatment for traumatized youth, and a whole host of other essential programs to support and protect children and families.

They often say that small businesses are the backbone of a community's economy. This is true because the dollars that are spent at those businesses, more often than not, stay in that community — helping everyone prosper. The Clackamas Children's Safety Levy aims to do the same by making sure that your tax dollars stay in Clackamas County and go directly to trusted and proven local nonprofits that are built to serve the most vulnerable children and youth in our communities. While a slight increase in property taxes — less than \$48 per year for the average homeowner — may cause hesitation for some, it truly is the smartest choice and will produce the best results for your money.

Ask yourself: would you rather your hard-earned tax dollars go to short-term Band-Aid programs like prisons and emergency room bills or to long-term support programs that help children dealing with domestic violence, sexual exploitation and housing instability? The fact is, children are the future of our society and voting yes on the Clackamas Children's Safety Levy is a vote to end cycles of violence, abuse and neglect that darken their futures. As a county, we can all step up to support the future business leaders, entrepreneurs, employees, and consumers that will eventually give back to the community that supported their safe and healthy childhoods.

Finally, we know that a successful business is a transparent business. We support the Clackamas Children's Safety Levy because it is built to be accountable to voters and taxpayers. Organizations that receive funding from the levy will undergo annual

performance and financial audits that will be reviewed by a county-appointed citizen advisory board. That means that citizens, non-profit organizations, and government officials will work together to ensure children and youth in Clackamas County are safe from violence, abuse, and neglect so they can thrive into adulthood.

Please join us in investing in our children and investing in our future. Vote yes on Measure 3-564 — the Clackamas Children's Safety Levy by Nov. 3.

Nina Carlson is the president of the Clackamas County Business Alliance and Nellie deVries is the executive director of the Clackamas County Business Alliance.
