



Photo by Pat Sullivan

A group of state senators and representatives formed an American Civil Liberties Union sponsored panel Monday night. The legislators varied in their opinions of just how the concept of civil liberties should be interpreted, but concluded that public officials serve an important function in civil liberty protection.

Legislative panel explores civil liberties viewpoint

By JANE LEHMAN
Of the Emerald

Protection of civil liberties is an important function served by public officials, concluded a panel of state legislators Monday night.

The local chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union brought together Sens. Ed Fadeley, D-Eugene, and Ted Kulongoski, D-Junction City, and Reps. Grattan Kerans, D-Eugene, Mary Burrows, R-Eugene, and Bill Rogers, R-Vida to explore civil liberties issues. The 35-member audience listened to the two hours of discussion held at Harris Hall.

The panel opened discussion by defining what constitutes a civil liberty, essentially concluding the concept can be interpreted in numerous ways.

To Kulongoski the term refers to any provisions of the Bill of Rights, such as free speech and press.

Kerans felt the term had to be defined on a "case by case basis," while Fadeley suggested a civil liberty is "anything you want it to be and certainly something you don't want to have taken away from you."

Both Burrows and Rogers described the role of legislator as a link between the citizen and the government.

"A legislator can call attention to a given situation," said Burrows, citing the example of Portland Rep. Jim Chrest's "personal outrage" that initiated investigations into the Oregon Liquor Control Commission.

Rogers described himself as an "advocate" for his constituents by detecting "restrictions used to

cover-up administrative inefficiency," or, conversely, by explaining situations that are correctly handled, but explained poorly to the people involved.

However, Rogers is worried by government responsiveness to only public officials and not to the citizenry that is affected.

"Every citizen should have as much of a right to backass to any state agency as I do," he said.

The use of voter rolls to select people for jury duty, polygraph regulations and computer programming security topped Kerans' list of civil liberties abuses.

The potential of the Children Services Division (CSD) to violate civil liberties was discussed at length by the panel. Each of the legislators was able to relate an experience of CSD taking custody of a child without ample proof of abuse or failing to inform parents of their rights.

"Sometimes their (CSD) only justification is that statistically the parents could have abused the child," said Rogers.

"But we never do know if the parent is beating his kid," added Burrows. She confirmed that the CSD and juvenile departments are "the stickiest part" of dealing with civil liberty infractions.

Civil liberty infringements initiated by the legislature can be blamed on "the time pressure factor" and an "imperfect government process," according to Kulongoski.

"We don't attempt to violate civil liberties," he said. "But government can love a person to death by trying to accomplish too much."

Pamphlet details rebate process for Oregon homeowner, renter

The pamphlet gives information on how to file, who is eligible, what to do when several people are paying rent on one unit, what to do if utilities are included in the rent and where to go for more information on the program.

While renters can receive up to \$328, homeowners can get a maximum amount of \$655. The exact amount depends on the amount of income.

The pamphlet urges everyone to file, because the process is simple and persons cannot get the refund unless they file a claim for one.

All Oregon residents should receive income tax packets in the mail. Packets will also be available at the ASUO Off-Campus Housing Office in Suite 3, EMU.

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They will also be distributed at banks, courthouses and post offices downtown.

In this case, any one who pays rent in Oregon is considered a "resident." However, one must have a total household income of less than \$16,000.

If a renter's landlord pays property taxes on the rental, the renter is eligible for a refund.

However, persons living in dorms, co-ops, sororities and fraternities do not qualify for refunds.

If the renter lives with other folks, he or she must be the only person in that household to file a refund claim. The roommate with the lowest income should file to ensure the greatest possible benefits. That roommate will then re-

ceive the entire refund and is responsible for dividing it up among the rest of the dwellers.

The free brochure, called "Special Tax Refunds for Oregon Homeowners and Renters" is printed and distributed by the Oregon Student Public Interest Research Group.

Applications for refunds must be made by April 15.

With a new set of tuition payments coming up shortly, students living off-campus should be aware that renter refunds up to \$328 can be theirs under Oregon's Homeowner and Renter Property Tax Refund Program.

The University Off Campus Housing office has compiled a brochure telling renters and homeowners how to apply for the 1977 tax rebate.

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