

Critic battles free speech intrusion

SB 1437: 'Two pounds of repression

Story and Photo
By GREG WASSON
Of the Emerald

"This bill," said Frank Wilkinson, pointing to the 682-page proposed law in front of him, "is two pounds and some odd ounces of repression."

Wilkinson spent Friday touring Eugene speaking against Senate Bill 1437, according to him, a reworked version of Senate Bill 1.

In three appearances Wilkinson berated the bill which he claimed would put "a Watergate-type straitjacket on the American people."

Wilkinson said if passed, the bill would stifle free speech, undermine labor unions, criminalize political activity and much more. As a specific example of the repressive nature of the bill, Wilkinson pointed to the part of the bill reenacting the Logan Act. Passed during John Adams' administration, the Logan Act allows only the President to contact foreign governments. According to Wilkinson, the law is universally ignored and violated every day.

"But it was not a dead letter when the Vietnam War came. When Attorney General Ramsey

Clark and Jane Fonda went to Hanoi, there was enormous pressures on the justice department to prosecute them under the Logan Act."

Wilkinson pointed out that the bill would make it illegal to advertise the availability of an abortion.

"How can the courts say a woman has the right to an abortion," Wilkinson asked, "and then Congress pass a law making it a crime to tell a woman where she can get one?"

He also objected to the bill's definition of obscenity. Senate Bill 1 defined obscene material as that which appealed to purient interests. That's the definition given by the Supreme Court in the Miller Case of 1973. Wilkinson says the definition part of SB 1437, is a bad one.

"Nobody knows what in the hell purient interests are. The Supreme Court has got to work themselves out of that bag but instead of allowing them to work themselves out, SB 1437 freezes into statutory law the holdings in Miller."

But Wilkinson's main objection to the bill was the restrictions he claims it would put on free speech.

"It's clear that the drafters of this bill are gearing up for repression. Everything that was used to oppose Watergate or the Vietnam War, the powers of the first amendment, become, in many, many cases, felony charges against you."

The bill was approved by the Senate in January and is now property of the Houses Judiciary Committee. Wilkinson says Ted Kennedy has shepherded the bill because he wants to be President.

"The majority members of the Judiciary Committee are ultra-conservative. Ted Kennedy has been working for four years to build his fences with them. He's



In three appearances Friday in Eugene, Frank Wilkinson spoke to the discredit of Senate Bill 1437. Wilkinson says the bill would stifle free speech, undermine labor unions, criminalize political activity and much more.

doing his job very well. Eastland announced last week that he's resigning and Kennedy will become chairperson of Judiciary as a direct payoff for this bill."

Wilkinson claims chairing

Judiciary will help Kennedy should he decide to make a try for the White House.

"There's no seat in Congress where you will keep more in the public limelight and where you can do more favors for more people than you can there. It's a perfect steppingstone to higher office."

Wilkinson urged those opposed to the bill to write to Peter Rodino, chair of the Judiciary Committee, James Mann, chair of the subcommittee hearing the bill and James Weaver, representative of the fourth district. Letters to call three should be addressed to the House Office Building, Washington, DC, 20515.

NORML-ize laws, urges state director

By SUSAN OUDERKIRK
of the Emerald

Oregon's chapter of the National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws (NORML) is intensifying its political profile, according to Ron Friedland, Oregon's coordinator for NORML.

Friedland said Oregon was the first state to eliminate criminal penalties for possession of an ounce or less of marijuana (October, 1973) and Oregon has been targeted by the national NORML to decriminalize the cultivation of marijuana. The State Democratic Platform has just overwhelmingly passed a plank that calls for decriminalization of up to seven cultivated plants. NORML's long range goal, Friedland told his audience, is to legalize the possession and cultivation of marijuana.

Many Oregon residents are not aware of the Oregon chapter, Friedland said. He is working toward making people aware that there is a chapter in Oregon, centralized conveniently in Eugene, and that it is specifically working to change Oregon laws. An office will be set up soon in Eugene to handle day-to-day business, Friedland said.

"One of the problems we face in Oregon is that we have a lot of interest and interest groups who try to reform marijuana laws," Friedland said. NORML, organized in Oregon for only a short time, is trying to bring all these groups together and begin a unified front, according to Friedland. National NORML, San Francisco, would be more financially supportive if Oregon's chapter can prove it can stand on its own feet, Friedland said.

Specifically, Oregon's chapter of NORML is trying to bring about decriminalization of cultivation and other reforms by showing legislators there is already widespread support for NORML's objectives.

"We have 14,000 signatures" on a petition already, according to Bill Dwyer, chair of Oregon's chapter of NORML. The chapter also plans to circulate a questionnaire to legislative candidates after the May 23 primary elections that will determine who among the candidates are supportive and who are not supportive of the marijuana reform. The results will be published, according to Friedland.

The time to begin working on getting governmental representatives who are sympathetic to changing our marijuana laws is now, not after they are elected, according to Dwyer. But, NORML needs people who can commit time, energy, talent and money to effectively actualize its goals.

NORML fund-raising campaigns are continuous in Eugene and several donation canisters have been placed at consenting businesses throughout Eugene. "Many of the people (proprietors) dropped the first few coins in themselves," Friedland said. Other fundraising projects are underway.

Seniors need volunteers

Eugene Parks and Recreation has initiated a new position entitled Nursing Home-Community Liaison, coordinated by Ruth Egger.

The project focuses on integration of nursing home and retirement center residents into community recreation programs, and volunteers are needed for the program to befriend participants or provide transportation.

Residents involved in the program will have the opportunity to participate in community recreation, be a member of another social community, and choose from numerous activity alternatives.

For more information, contact Egger at 687-5311.

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