

House must still act on bill

Senate relaxes lobbyist reporting law

By Dana Tims
Of the Emerald

SALEM—From the sound of it lobbyists are so important that everyone should have one.

Sen. George Wingard, R-Eugene, said some of them are his friends. Sen. Fred Heard, D-Klamath Falls, scotched the notion that lobbyists are, "some kind of fungus." Sen. Dick Groener, D-Milwaukie, claimed that he accepts dinners from lobbyists, "whenever I'm asked."

Reporters--and lobbyists--were savoring every word.

These remarks came during floor debate on Senate Bill 125 which eventually passed Tuesday, complete with amendments suggested by the Capitol Club, the Legislature's own lobbyist group.

Passage of the bill modifies existing state statutes pertaining to lobbyists in two ways: by requiring quarterly, rather than monthly, expenditure reports during the legislative session; and by in-

creasing the amount of a single expenditure which must be listed on the lobbyist's statement from \$25 to \$40.

That \$15 increase, dwarfed by legislative figures that often run into the millions, was a key point of the debate. Those in favor maintained it is only "a reflection of reality."

Those opposed, however, claimed that their constituents view lobbyists with distrust. Any appearance of increased in-

fluence buying, they said, would not be accepted.

The 1973 Legislature responded to Watergate by forming the Oregon Government Ethics Commission. The \$25 limit was established at that time. If a lobbyist spends more than that in a single evening while entertaining a legislator, the expenditure has to be reported.

Sen. Walt Brown, D-Lake Oswego, argued that \$25 is still an adequate single-shot entertainment ceiling. Based on his own figures, a meal plus tips in an "expensive" restaurant now costs \$24.

"That's still a generous figure," said Brown. "And you could use that extra dollar to buy some Bromo-Seltzer."

Sen. Keith Burbridge, D-Salem, floor carrier of Senate Bill 125, said the increase is needed to "offset the ravages of inflation." A rise in the consumer price index of 63 percent since 1973, he noted, necessitates the increase.

Sen. Jan Wyers, D-Portland, opposed the increase, saying voters link the amount of money lobbyists are allowed to spend entertaining legislators with "corruption."

Before Tuesday's session, Wyers distributed to Senate colleagues results of a survey taken in his district on the matter. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents, he said, favored the banning of any such expenditures.

"We're not talking about brib-

ery," said Wyers. "We're talking about influence and the appearance of influence."

But most senators rejected his view, and some took the opportunity to explain how they see the role of the lobbyist.

"That information," said Burbridge of Wyers' survey, "was probably distributed by Common Cause or Common Curse. Information distributed by lobbyists is important. If a person can't resist the temptation to flop over at a cup of coffee, that person doesn't belong in this adult assembly."

Although cups of coffee haven't yet reached \$40 in the Capitol's restaurant, Groener agreed with Burbridge's assessment.

"My heart goes out to those who are so weak that they capitulate because of one dinner" said Groener. "I'm tired of criticisms of special interests. We need to hear from them to."

Wingard then moved that the bill be returned to committee for further consideration, objecting to the reduction in filings required of a lobbyist during the session.

"Lobbyists are honest and some are my friends," said Wingard. "but especially during the session, it's important that we see exactly how much friendship is being created."

Wingard's motion was defeated and the bill passed by an 18-9 vote. Now, it goes to the House, where members will get another chance to expound on the thin line between entertainment and influence.

Club shows 'tricks of the trade' to members of lobby groups

By Dana Tims
Of the Emerald

SALEM--A batch of new lobbyists received their first lesson in "winning allies and influencing legislators" Tuesday at an orientation meeting at the Capitol Club.

The club is made up of legislative lobbyists, and it attempts to regulate internally the lobbying function.

Since the charge of bribery or undue influence is only as far away as an unreported dinner, following the rules laid down by the 1973 Legislature regarding lobbying is imperative.

One serious breach and a lobbyist is finished.

Several members of the Oregon Student Lobby joined prospective lobbyists representing various consumer and business groups at the meeting.

They received an explanation of the club's bylaws, a summary of the proposed changes in the 1973 lobbying statutes, and a few tips on how to maximize their effectiveness.

"Make as many contacts as possible," said Nan Dewey, chairer of the club's orientation committee.

She noted that two events in particular provide "excellent opportunities" to meet legislators. These are the upcoming Hello Party and the Sine Die Party held near the end of the session.

"About 90 percent of the legislators will be at those functions" said Dewey. "Attending them is as important as cultivating relationships with staff aides and committee assistants. All of these people can be very helpful."

Mike Freel, executive director of the ethics commission, listed for the group actions prohibited under Oregon law. These actions include: lobbying for a tax bill that would benefit directly either the lobbyist or his employer; causing legislation to be introduced that would create a new lobbyist position; and making false statements or circulating false documents.

To underscore the abrasive nature of lobbying Freel added two tips of his own for the members.

"Number one," he said, "use of the full body slam on the floor of the House or the Senate is not allowed. And two, don't slit your wrists inside the Capitol--alcoholic bleeding is not allowed."

Legislators, it seems, aren't the only group of people in Salem with problems ahead.

Pro-abortion forces taking aim

By GREG WASSON
Of the Emerald

SALEM — Exactly six years after the Supreme Court determined the constitutional right of women to an abortion, the National Abortion Rights Action League sent a reminder of the occasion to the Legislature.

Eighty-one percent of Oregon voters say the decision to abort should be left to women and their doctors, the league told the Legislature, citing the results of a survey completed by the Cambridge Survey Research group.

However, only 52 percent of those questioned favored providing abortions at state expense to women on welfare.

"Discrepancy exists because people are opposed to any sort of welfare, opposed to their taxes being spent on anything," explains NARAL State Coordinator Mary Heffernan.

Heffernan said many voters don't understand that taxes will be spent one way or another and estimated that if slightly more than \$1 million recommended to fund welfare abortions by Gov. Victor Atiyeh isn't approved, the state will end up paying over \$4 million in child support.

The \$1 million contained in the Atiyeh budget assumes that the current restrictions on state paid abortions will be continued. Previously, the state paid for the abortion of any woman eligible for welfare, which allowed 2,013 state paid abortions in fiscal year 1976 and 2,600 in fiscal year 1977.

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Since March 3, the state has paid for the operations only for women who conceived while receiving welfare, with women limited to one abortion. In the period between March 3 and Dec. 31, the state paid for 944 abortions.

As part of its activities at the Capitol, the NARAL polled legislators on their feelings about abortion. The results of that poll will be available later in the week.

At a press conference Monday morning, Heffernan explained that pro-choice forces are concentrating on state legislators, because it is unrealistic to expect rapid changes at the federal level.

"The Congress faces about 400 pieces of anti-abortion legislation each year," she said. They have as a result not only restricted abortion for welfare women, but for military dependents and Peace Corps volunteers also."

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