

Public financing Bills probe campaigns

By GREG WASSON
Of the Emerald

SALEM — In 1976, voters rejected public financing of political campaigns. The 1977 Legislature responded by approving a system allowing taxpayers to earmark one dollar of their taxes for recognized political parties.

In its first year, the set-up generated \$166,645 for the Democrats and \$89,254 for the Republicans. The 183,063 income tax forms processed so far this year have yielded \$39,516 to the Democrats, \$16,078 for the Republicans, \$123 for the U.S. Labor party and \$19 for the Libertarian party.

Friday, the House Elections Committee heard testimony on a bill, HB 2281, which would end the check-off system. The bill is sponsored by mostly Republicans in the legislature and a handful of Democrats.

According to Rep. Donna Zajonc, R-Salem, a main supporter of the legislation, the check-off money can be used by the parties to buffalo and blackmail.

"I'm concerned that the dollar check-off is giving a lot of money to the two major parties, and that amount of money, without any guidelines, can be abused."

The check-off is seen as Democratic legislation and was supported heavily last session by James Klonoski, state chair of the party.

The Elections Committee took no action on the bill.

Where the Zajonc bill seeks to repeal one

form of public financing, HB 2708 would expand another: the tax credit. Currently, individuals can get \$25 back from the state for political contributions and those filing joint returns \$50. An increase sponsored by Rep. George Starr, D-Portland, would double those figures.

The federal government also has the tax credit scheme and the increase has already been approved. The bill would bring Oregon law into compliance.

Starr says the tax credit is a good idea.

"It gives a lot more citizen participation and avoids the necessity of people who need campaign funds turning to the traditional sources — sources that may want some kind of favor later."

According to the Legislative Revenue Office, the number of taxpayers claiming the credit grows each election year but has never climbed above two percent. The office estimates that at current levels the program will cost \$1.4 million over the next two years. If the boost is approved, estimates are that the plan will carry a \$2.2 million price tag.

Figures prepared by Oregon Common Cause show that from 1974 to 1978, campaign expenditures of the average candidate for the state Senate grew from \$9395 to \$15,890. The group says that in the same four years, special interest contributions increased from \$667,011 to \$1,423,598.

Another bill, HB 3011, would try to cap the burgeoning costs of elections.

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Experts to review graduate programs

Six social scientists from universities around the country will visit the University Friday to evaluate graduate programs in political science, sociology, economics and urban studies.

The six professors were selected by the State Board of Higher Education's Office of Academic Affairs in cooperation with the University's graduate deans and departments being reviewed.

The consultants will assess the quality of faculty, the adequacy of resources such as libraries, program objectives and the climate for learning and research.

The visit to campus will include a tour of facilities and meetings with students, faculty and administrators.

Within three to four weeks of their visit, the consultants will submit written findings to the Office of Academic Affairs, which will prepare a report for the Board of Higher Education.

Dr. Donald R. Matthews, head of the Department of Political Science, University of Washington, and Dr. Elinor Ostrom, professor of political science, Indiana University, will assess the master's and doctoral programs in political science; Dr. Gideon Sjoberg, professor of sociology, University of Texas, and Dr. Carl W. Backman, professor of

sociology, University of Nevada, will evaluate the master's and doctoral programs in sociology;

Dr. Edwin S. Mills, professor of economics and urban studies, Princeton University, and Dr. Thomas Mayer, professor of economics, University of California at Davis, will review the master's and doctoral programs in economics.

Consultants will be selected soon to review graduate programs in geography at Oregon State University, Portland State University and the University of Oregon. Their visits are planned for late April.

emu Cultural Forum

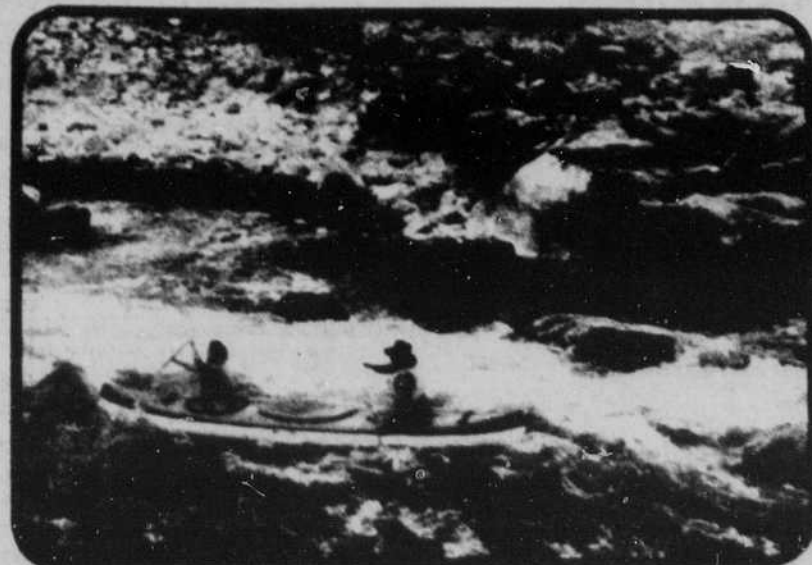


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