



greg wasson

## a quorum of one

The ballot is almost always referred to as an offensive power. In our system of majority rule, the civics-class notion is that if you just band enough people together you can force the changes that you want.

However, introduction of the student unemployment bill is evidence that voting has defensive capabilities too. Unfortunately, students haven't used that either. As a class, they have an extremely poor attendance record at the polls, and failing that leaves them wide open to attacks like this legislation.

What the bill would do is create the presumption that any full-time student is unavailable for employment and therefore ineligible for benefits if they should lose their current job.

Currently, students are a suspect class and subjected to close scrutiny by the employment division, but as with other claimants, they are denied money only if the state can prove they don't fit the required categories of able, available and actively seeking work.

The bill would shift the burden of proof from

the state to the individual making it, in the words of one representative, "supremely difficult" for a laid-off student to collect.

Why were students singled out? Let's look at the situation from the industry's perspective.

Unemployment insurance is too high, and a sure way to reduce the cost is to reduce the number of claimants. That takes legislative action, and lawmakers are hesitant to mess with the people who they would like to ask for another term. The answer? Attack a segment of the population that doesn't vote.

Luckily for students, that attack wasn't well-coordinated.

First came the admission from the employment division that there really is no substantial record of student abuse of the program. Then came the lame assurance that the bill wouldn't really bring about a significant change. If that's the case, queried one committee member, why approve the bill? For administrative ease, responded the witness. It would make our case stronger if our denial is appealed.

In other words, the alteration would make it much more difficult for students to collect.

Next up, a business representative pointed out to the committee that the almost routine denial of student claims used to be the law in Oregon, but the Oregon Court of Appeals reversed the decision in the mid-'70s. Implying that everyone knows that the courts insist on burdening us with unreasoned and unjustified decisions, the witness appealed to the committee to return to the prior practice.

Not mentioned, of course, is the fact that the student of today is much different than the student of pre-1970.

Many scholars now have families and jobs in addition to their studies. Why shouldn't they be entitled to the same help as their counterparts who reject the rigors of study?

It would appear that a majority of the committee acting on the bill feels that they should, and students can rest assured that their trips to the "enjoyment" office won't suddenly become less fruitful.

## yours

### IFC, religion

I am writing in regard to Thursday's editorial "IFC needs to respect church-state limits." As a member of the Incidental Fee Committee I feel it is necessary to respond.

First, though an Emerald reporter covered our policy meeting last week where we discussed the issue of funding religious groups, she apparently did not tell you what had been decided. The consensus of the committee was that each group with religious overtones would have to convince the IFC that it was not promoting religion and so eligible for IFC funding. That is exactly what happened the next day at the goal hearings for Campus Crusade for Christ and the Latter Day Saints Student Association.

My next issue of contention with your editorial is that there wasn't one Emerald reporter at that hearing (even though you were informed about it). It is beyond me how you can comment about a hearing when you don't know exactly what was said there. What did happen was that the CCC could not convince the committee it

had any function outside of promoting Christ. However, the LDSSA was able to convince four members (myself included) that it was not at all in the business of promoting religion.

This brings me to another issue raised in your editorial which bothered me. Though the editorial's title proclaims the IFC should "respect church-state limits," I do not believe you know what those limits are. We do because we talked with legal counsel and did some research on the issue. State monies (and so incidental fees) may not be used to fund a religious organization. That is the law. In addition, eight years ago the Oregon Attorney General laid down five criteria by which to judge whether or not a group has a religious function. They are 1) its stated purpose; 2) its governing group and clientele, and the degree of religion involved; 3) its relationship with other religious institutions; 4) the place of religion in its activities; and 5) its image.

Those are the criteria by which the IFC will judge a group. Any student organization which can convince the committee that it is not promoting religion is

eligible for funding. That is what the LDSSA did and the CCC could not do.

Lastly I take issue with your suggestion that Dave Eaton "correct this glaring inconsistency in IFC policy." Where you think Eaton has this power I don't know. All he can do is veto any funds we may later allocate; he cannot veto a goal approval.

In the future I suggest you attend IFC meetings at which decisions are made with which you may later disagree. This to get your facts straight. Also, in the future, you might research the law before you insinuate we are acting in an unconstitutional manner.

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### Biased coverage

How shall we touch one another when the Oregonian, the Register-Guard, the Emerald and broadcast media "engineer public opinion" by blocking the "First Amendment goal of achieving the widest possible dissemination of information from diverse and antagonistic sources"? (436 U.S. 775.)

A case in point is an Emerald editor telling me she killed coverage of my legal complaint against lawyer/legislators unconstitutionally serving in two branches of government (3 Oregon Constitution par 1) because (a) it was not a University concern and (b) my personal vendetta!

She apparently disagrees with the concept of constitutional supremacy (6 U.S. Constitution par 2) and remembers a March 7, 1978 Emerald story about lawyers/insurers/public officials obstructing my Oregon Workers' Compensation restoration petition drive and recent closure of my injury claim without benefit of de-novo judicial review, which was followed by a U.S. Supreme Court refusal to review violations of said civil rights.

It is lawyers' "abuse of power," not my "vendetta" at issue here!

How can you ignore lawyers' unconstitutionally being legislators when their Oregon State Bar Association monopoly, (ORS Chapter 9) violates Sherman anti-trust laws and is now subject to legislative sunset review?

How can you ignore lawyers use of the courts as political retribution weapons against (a) public participation; (b) laws in effect as of date of contract; (c) circuit and appellate court review of administrative orders; (d) oral argument and (e) findings of fact and conclusions of law demands?

As a 48-year-old University of Oregon School of Business insurance major graduate with a story to tell that could only help others because my case has run its corrupted course, I call upon the spirit of Thomas Paine to unblock our media as a seeker of truth and protector of justice!

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Letters must be signed, the author's field of study or faculty status noted and must include address and phone number for verification.