

Law tightens portion of landlord-tenant act

By GREG WASSON
Of the Emerald

SALEM — The last decade has seen the Legislature attempt to define the relationship between landlord and tenant. But Rep. Norm Smith, R-Tigard, says it's incorrect to say that all tenants have the same problems.

"Maybe a uniform act is too difficult to write. What we're seeing this session are bills from the mobile home tenants saying 'We need a little special treatment because we're different.'"

Whatever the tenant's identity, Smith says it is important to remember the historical approach that owners should be free to do what they want with their land.

"Now tenants are demanding more rights, as if they had a vested interest in the land simply because they pay rent. The Legislature has tended to give away too many of those traditional property owners' rights to tenants."

Smith is a member of the House Judiciary Committee, which deals with landlord-tenant legislation.

A second member of that committee, Rep. Margie Hendriksen, D-Eugene, disagrees that renter legislation has placed undue restrictions on landlords' freedoms.

"Our landlord-tenant law isn't out of line so far as protecting the tenant from arbitrary actions by the landlord. Under the old idea, you wouldn't have had zoning or that kind of thing. But I thought we moved away from that a hundred years ago. People don't have absolute rights to deal with their property anyway they want to. We do have regulations for social purposes."

Monday, the House approved a bill making it easier for owners of self-storage units to confiscate property from a tenant who doesn't pay rent. Current law exempts clothing and jewelry from the items a landlord can seize when rent isn't paid. The legislation, HB-2393, says the clothing exemption doesn't apply to things stored in self-storage facilities.

Rep. Kip Lombard, R-Ashland, explained one reason for removing the protection.

"The clothing which the tenant intends to wear and

which is so necessary and important is, in practically all cases, going to be kept where the tenant is living. That clothing which for any number of reasons may be stored in an outside facility doesn't carry with it the same personal connection."

Another representative explained an additional reason for the change. It seems that if there currently is any clothing stored in a warehouse, the owner can't change the lock to force the renters to pay up. By allowing the clothing to be impounded, the Legislature is saying that landlords should be able to take the goods until they get paid.

Under present law, a drug dealer who sells legal substances as drugs commits no crime. House Bill 2066 would change that.

The legislation would make sale of imitation drugs a Class A felony. As Rep. Gretchen Kafoury, D-Portland, explains, police are hampered by the lack of a legal tool in such a situation.

"A lot of the speed that's sold is just caffeine. So, if law enfor-

ment people catch somebody with 20,000 tablets of something, run it through the lab, and all it is is caffeine, there is not a darn thing they can do about it," Kafoury says.

The bill was introduced at the request of police agencies but Kafoury jokingly adds that it could be viewed as consumer protection legislation.

While it may not stop a moving car, the law gives Oregon pedestrians the right of way in a cross walk. At least that's one way to read the statute. Sen.

Dell Isham, D-Lincoln City, complains that the books can be interpreted differently.

"The most dangerous situation I see is where one driver on a four-lane highway stops, the pedestrian starts to cross, and the person driving in the next lane interprets the law differently and continues to drive."

Isham has introduced legislation, SB 407, saying that a car must stop and remain stopped whenever a crosswalk is occupied.

Reagan submits budget; \$48 billion lost in cuts

WASHINGTON (AP) — Pres. Reagan laid before Congress Tuesday a \$695-billion budget he claimed would return government to "economic sanity" through overall cuts of \$48.6 billion despite a bolstered military.

Reagan's revised fiscal 1982 program would boost defense spending by \$4.8 billion and slash 300 domestic programs from the projections left by Jimmy Carter.

Budget Director David Stockman told reporters the administration's approach would save \$409 billion in the next five years, about three-quarters of the reductions necessary to meet the president's goal of balancing the budget in 1984.

The fiscal 1982 package would leave a \$45 billion deficit, partly stemming from Reagan's separate proposals to cut tax rates.

In the Senate, Majority Leader Howard Baker of Tennessee urged his fellow Republicans to postpone until next year any legislative proposals not connected to the tax and spending efforts.

The budget contained \$13.8 billion worth of newly announced cuts, including deeper reductions than previously

sought in welfare, water projects, job programs, public housing, food stamps and education. First-time reductions in veterans programs, loan subsidies and dozens of social services also were proposed.

Reagan said in his formal message accompanying the document that it "will stop runaway inflation and revitalize our economy if given a chance."

The revised budget updated a preliminary spending cut plan the president announced last month. It was sent to Congress along with Reagan's proposal to trim personal income tax rates by nearly 30 percent over the next three years and cut business tax rates through accelerated depreciation schedules.

Top Republicans on Congress' tax-writing committees planned to introduce the administration's tax proposals Tuesday.

Reagan's spending plan, certain to stir a rousing fight in Congress, shows a startling shift in priority from social programs to a defense system beefed up by new weapons development.

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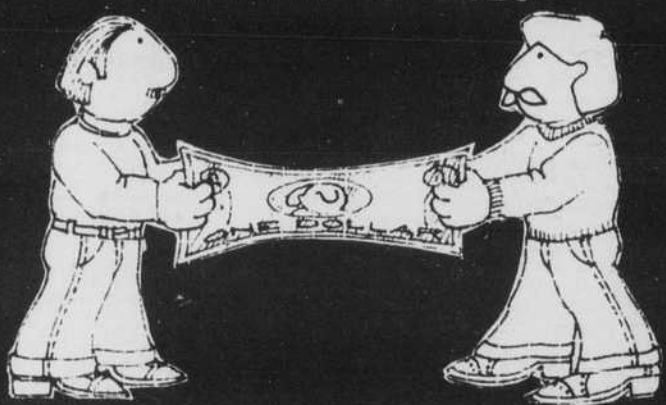
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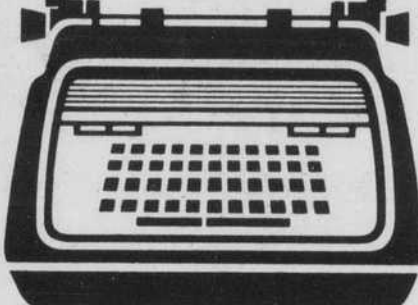
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