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Says draft won't return

President retains draft registration

WASHINGTON (AP) — Pres. Reagan on Thursday retained the draft registration system he once denounced and offered a grace period for signing up more than 800,000 young men who have not complied with the law.

Reagan said his decision, which marked a sharp reversal from opposition to the registration program during the 1980 presidential campaign, did not foreshadow a return to the draft.

"However, we live in a dangerous world," the president said in a statement. "In the event of a future threat to national safety, registration could save the United States as much as six weeks in mobilizing emergency manpower."

Reagan said late registrations are being accepted "and I have instructed the Department of Justice to make provision for a grace period for late registrants."

Presidential counselor Edwin Meese said those who failed to register in the past would be given a 30- to 60-day grace period in which to sign up.

Since 1980, 6.6 million young men 18 through 21 have registered for the draft, but more than 800,000 have failed to comply, according to the latest Selective Service figures. The maximum penalty for not registering is five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

On Dec. 10, the Justice

Department temporarily suspended plans to seek indictments against some of those 800,000 who failed to register.

Young men are required to register within 30 days of their 18th birthday. Failure to comply carries a maximum penalty of five years' imprisonment and a \$10,000 fine.

Reagan said his decision was based on the findings of a military manpower task force chaired by Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger.

The Pentagon chief and Secretary of State Alexander Haig had said abolishing registration now would send the wrong signal to the Soviet Union in the midst of the crisis in Poland.

Reagan, however, did not mention the crackdown in Poland in his statement. And Meese said the events in Poland were not a "major consideration" in Reagan's decision.

"There's no philosophical change," Meese said. "It's a practical change" based on "the new information that he did not have a year ago" — that registration would save six to seven weeks in mobilization.

He said a previous report said that only five to six days would be saved. However, the Carter administration disavowed that estimate and later claimed registration would save 13 to 14 weeks in a mobilization.

Sen. Mark Hatfield, R-Ore.,



Ronald Reagan

Photo by Bob Baker

said Reagan "has been victimized — perhaps by his staff — into assuming that a lot of time would be saved in a mobilization by pre-registration."

The decision to extend registration as a symbolic gesture of support for Poland is "just an excuse," said Christina Cowgar of the Eugene-based Coalition Opposing Registration and the Draft.

The organization is planning to support those who choose not to register. "We think it's very important to oppose (the extension of draft registration) and support those threatened with prosecution," added Cowgar.

To support them CORD plans demonstrations — once the first person is prosecuted — in front of Eugene's Federal Building,

she said.

"This announcement underlines the need for draft counseling. People should be aware that the draft is not going to go away." Free draft counseling is available through CORD at 485-4611.

Reagan said Thursday that his administration "remains steadfast in its commitment to an all-volunteer defense force."

Panel agrees state may have to cut college

But only as a final economic option

By BRIAN BUBAK
Of the Emerald

Closing one of the state's institutions of higher education may be a solution to higher education's ills, said State Rep. Margie Hendriksen, D-Eugene.

Speaking at an open forum with State Rep. Grattan Kerans, D-Eugene, higher education Chancellor Roy Lieuallen, and ASUO Pres. Rich Wilkins, Hendriksen indicated her willingness to pursue such a measure in order to save higher education as a whole.

"If it were a choice between the survival of the University of Oregon and Western Oregon State College, I wouldn't hesitate (to urge for closure of WOSC)," Hendriksen said.

Hendriksen emphasized she would need to examine all possible options before even considering such a drastic move, but her goal is "to preserve quality and eliminate duplication of programs."

Kerans disagreed in method with Hendriksen's position, claiming it would take at least five years before substantial savings could be expected from such a closure.

However, Kerans agreed with her in principle, saying, "We have too many colleges for the size of our state."

Both legislators blamed Gov. Vic Atiyeh and Pres. Ronald Reagan for the problems the state's higher education system is currently experiencing.

"We are here today because of Ronald Reagan," Kerans said, adding "the governor has abandoned us."

All four panel members agreed an increase in revenues is the best solution to higher education's problems.

Lieuallen cited a 24 percent reduction in the portion of personal income tax earmarked for higher education as a serious shortcoming.

"The state of Oregon, over the last 15 years, has assigned a

low priority to the Department of Higher Education," Lieuallen noted. "We have turned to tuition as the principle source... for support for our colleges and universities. It's of great concern to us that this kind of a shift in state priorities has occurred... and we believe it is high time to stop it."

Hendriksen concurred with Lieuallen. "It would be possible to establish an income tax rate system which would allow us to raise new revenue. I certainly think that's something we need to look into."

Panel members also agreed tuition increases are not the answer.

"You can't raise the price beyond the point that is reasonable and bearable," Lieuallen said.

Kerans observed that "if we continue the trend we have started, the last student in the system of higher education would pay \$1.2 billion in tuition."



State Rep. Grattan Kerans

Photo by David Corey