

# Looks like another budget deficit for Atiyeh

The odds, being touted by Gov. Vic Atiyeh, are 50-50 that he'll be forced to call a special session of the Legislature this summer to handle another deficit in the state's budget. This will be the fourth such session to be called during Atiyeh's term as Oregon's governor.

Last week Atiyeh made public the preliminary figures on the status of Oregon's economy, which, according to the figures appears to be headed into an indeterminable deficit. Atiyeh and his Council of Economic Advisers will be meeting today to analyze the figures and guess the size of the budget deficit. It's expected to be between \$30 million and \$100 million. The last time the Legislature met in special session it was to handle a predicted revenue shortfall of \$213.7 million, which then grew by \$100 million. That leaves little room for faith in preliminary budget figures.

The blame for this deficit is being put on lower

tax collections and the lack of significant improvement in the economy. Those are the primary factors on the state and federal level in the budget shortfall. But, myopic leadership can't be overlooked.

What's got Atiyeh worried is a decline in the average weekly wage and continuing high unemployment. The federal deficit is also important — as the larger the federal deficit the less chance interest rates, already exorbitantly high, will come down. The high interest rates are considered responsible for the depression in the construction and timber industries.

The gnarly finger of blame is being thrust in every direction. Chang Sohn, Oregon's econometrician, cites the delay of Congress' passage of the federal budget as the stumbling block postponing by three months Oregon's "economic turnaround."

Atiyeh may not have to call a special session if the size of the deficit is between \$30 to \$40 million. Apparently, Atiyeh says no major policy decision will need to be made to handle a deficit in this range. But, historically, deficits rarely remain in so manageable a range.

Lawmakers in the Legislature are hoping Atiyeh will allow them an active role in making budget decisions on this latest budget deficit. They want to avoid another lengthy and bitter battle. A lengthy and bitter struggle appears inevitable once Atiyeh announces his countermeasures. If there are more cuts in higher education and essential services — which is more than likely — the fight will be on.

This fourth budget deficit points out, once again, that Atiyeh is not "leading" Oregon toward an economically secure future. He is not leading at all — he is only reacting, and reacting badly.

## letters

### No on measure 3

Oregonians will soon vote on Bond Measure no. 3, a request for \$60 million for the expansion of existing jail and prison facilities to alleviate overcrowding. This figure is deceiving for it is exclusive of interest rates, operation costs and inflation.

Construction of new facilities requires three to four years. According to Robert Watson, Administrator of Corrections, this delay would increase the cost per (maximum security) cell from \$65,000 to \$161,700. Aside from the greater cost, any delay offers little to relieve overcrowding. Operating costs are the most expensive, with the initial cost of constructing a medium security facility being matched every four to five years. To Oregonians this would mean \$120 million over 10 years and \$960 million over 30 years. Oregon cannot afford these enormous sums when there are daily accounts of budget cuts in education, community services and law enforcement.

Oregon incarcerates so many persons it ranks among the highest third of all states. Our nation detains over 550,000 people behind the walls of 6,980 correctional facilities. Few countries impose harsher sentences than the United States, and only South Africa and Russia imprison more people. Despite these disturbing facts people of Oregon, of our nation, do not feel safe; crime flourishes and so does the public's fear. Expanding existing correctional institutions is not the best solution.

Voters of New York, Michigan and Rhode Island opposed similar bond measures forcing these states to explore more immediate and cost efficient solutions to the dilemma of overcrowding.

Oregonians can do to the same. Vote no on measure 3.

Lora Pierce  
People for Prison Alternatives  
W. 23rd Eugene

### Poverty

There has been a great deal of conjecture about where our dear President may have gained the inspiration for his domestic social programs. After perusing the local libraries and scouring the ample bookshelves of friends, I believe I have found the basis for his argument. Our fine President, no doubt attracted by an appeal to his family ancestors and being of fine Irish stock, found that Jonathan Swift's "Modest Proposal" would be an ideal model for the solution of the nation's poverty.

Being a man of traditional values, he would most naturally be attracted to a proposal written in 1792.



'RELIGIOUS FREEDOM? WHY, WE'RE EVEN CONSIDERING BRINGING BACK COMPULSORY PRAYER IN SCHOOLS.'

Although this ingenious proposal was never implemented by His Majesty's Government, he apparently feels that there is no time like the present. Since slavery is once again coming into vogue among the gentility of Georgia and Beverly Hills, it is most natural to follow these trend-setters and develop a method by which the poor and destitute may become active members of the economy through the sale of their children for slaughter.

In order to escape criticism from the powerful lobby of agriculturalists, he would propose that this undertaking be not labeled as the development of new agricultural commodities but as national defense. By reinstating the draft, he would lend credence to his most holy "safety net" by leading those destitute babes to slaughter, not on foreign soil (that would smack of imperialism) but on the butcher blocks of our fine Eastern cities which are already overcrowded by the little beggars.

One need not question the reasoning behind our Chief Executive's decision, he is but following that high level of logic established by the American people who so wisely elected an actor for President. Now, having

given light to the President's ideas, I would encourage the nation's financial leaders to capitalize on this new-found opportunity before losing it to those fierce foreign competitors they are so fearful of.

Freeman Paine  
Columbia St. Eugene

### letters policy

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The letters **must** be limited to 250 words, signed, and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is turned in to The Emerald offices, EMU 300.

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