

editorial

Seat belts are good; mandatory law is not

There is no question that using seat belts saves lives. Numerous studies have carefully documented that use of seat belts has substantially reduced the number of deaths and serious injuries resulting from automobile accidents. According to the University of Michigan Transportation Research Institute, wearing seat belts reduces the chances of being killed or seriously injured by 50 percent. Other studies reveal similar findings.

Why then oppose a mandatory seat belt law in Oregon? Because people must learn to take responsibility for themselves. Government should not take that responsibility for them. People should be encouraged to wear seat belts, they should be informed that seat belts saves lives, but they should not be forced by the state to wear seat belts.

The Oregon House was right when it voted on Wednesday against sending a mandatory seat belt measure before voters next May. Strong public opposition to a mandatory seat belt law indicates that voters would likely kill such a measure at the polls. The entire push for a mandatory seat belt law should be abandoned by the House. Dragging it out further is a waste of time and money.

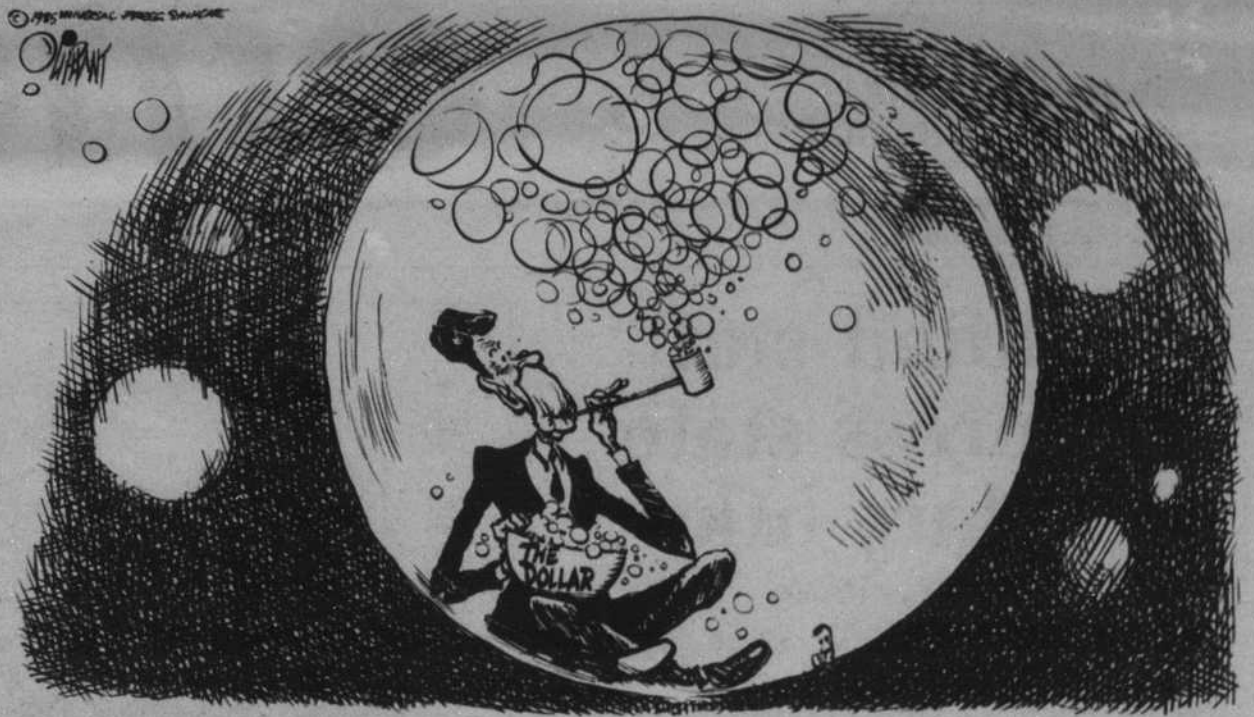
Even if such a law were enacted, it would be hard to enforce. How would a police officer be able to tell whether someone is buckled in while the vehicle is moving? Even more important is the question of whether government should be allowed, in the words of Rep. Andy Anderson, R-Roseburg, to intrude "on our personal liberties and our personal life." A mandatory seat belt law cannot be equated with other road safety laws such as those that forbid drinking and driving. The latter has the potential to affect other lives besides that of the driver. The former is strictly a personal issue.

People need to decide for themselves whether or not to wear seat belts. They need to take responsibility for their own lives. We urge Oregonians to "buckle-up for safety." Refusing to wear a seat belt when it is possible to do so is both careless and foolish. The choice, however, must remain a personal one. It should not be made by the government.

Reagan nominee has an 'impressive' background

Vernon Walters, President Ronald Reagan's nominee for U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, is likely to impress a lot of senators at his upcoming confirmation hearing. He has served under nearly every president since World War II, speaks eight languages, and has extensive international experience.

There is another side of Walters, however, that most Americans know very little about. His diplomatic-military portfolio reads like a visitor's list to "hot spots" of the world. For example, Walters was military attache to Rome in 1961 when Italy's coalition government was in danger of collapse. Walters advocated U.S. military force to keep the Socialists from coming to power. He was military attache to Brazil during the April 1964 military coup which ousted democratically-elected President Joao Goulart. He was also the deputy director of the CIA at the time of the 1973 military overthrow of Socialist President Salvador Allende in Chile. The list goes on. In 1981, Reagan appointed Walters U.S. ambassador-at-large, sending him to some 100 countries to "promote" U.S. policy. Reagan claims that Walters is highly qualified for the job of U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. Given his past history, it seems that Walters is just the kind of man that Reagan likes — a staunch anti-communist who believes in overthrowing governments in the name of "national security."



letters

Great loss

This is to express my deepest sorrow and tears for the great loss of Dr. Albert Szymanski, who had so much more to give yet, through knowledge, compassion, and friendship, left so much behind.

This campus will never be the same for those of us who knew his energy, dedication, and ideological perseverance, and how it derived only from his continuous devotion to "the people."

As one of the many who were inspired by his comradery, his willingness to stand up for his convictions amidst all adversaries, and his ultimate belief in the human race ("there is only one race"), I will not forget.

To those who shared his support for all minorities, workers, global economic and social equality, human rights and Third World struggles against tyrannies and imperialist exploitation, his work can only live through our actions. And to the few who knew his utopia and heart behind the mind... may his vision live on.

If only to remember you... words... unity "we shall overcome" carry on... to those who understand five stars against the shades of red the lion's roar of peasants as workers who pulled the thorns before us how hammers pounded loud at the loneliness of his knowing that sickles only rest

until the reaping of harvests brought forth through rebirth in the spring.

... if only to have said goodbye.
Leslie Shaheen
Friend/Student

Courageous

Looking back to trace my intellectual development I cannot help noticing the tremendous influence of Professor Albert Szymanski. Al was courageous and dignified to be insightful of social injustices in the U.S. and elsewhere. His commitment to social change was a channel for his genius in expression of tyrannies and oppressions in the Third World by the economic and political structures of the West. Being a powerful lecturer, he continually exposed the various avenues of manipulation that the capitalist system uses to legitimize and perpetuate its existence, such as schools, the media, and the corporations. The coherence and precision of his analysis is an undisputable fact. His absence is greatly felt.

How can a man of such high aims, achievements and energy that influenced many be so lonely and incapable of communicating his heart?

The soul is hard, roughed-up, lonely, it cries from inside and no audience outside. Perhaps this is how he felt before pulling the trigger.

With love and respect,
Babak Abbasiadeh

Sympathy

This tragic death has left a deeply shocked and grieving university community. I extend my deepest sympathy to Professor Szymanski's family in New York, his colleagues in the sociology department and the many students to whom he served as an inspiration in both academic and personal ways. The University has lost a fine professor and many of us have lost a great friend.

Michael Earl
History

Warm heart

After I arrived at Albert Szymanski's office for an afternoon meeting, I read a note

taped to his door which said simply that Professor Szymanski was dead. Feeling too shocked to cry, I later attended a gathering of faculty and students to process some of that shock and grief. Some of the feelings expressed in that short meeting should be shared with the University community as a whole.

Al Szymanski was a man often at the center of controversy, yet even his most ardent critics cannot deny him a distinguished place in his field as a person of dedication and passion for seeking of truth. For his students, he made sociology the compelling, questioning discipline that it is intended to be. He brought to the classroom an intense and brilliant intellect coupled with a warm heart that too few people ever took time to see.

Al Szymanski was respected and loved, and he will be missed. His legacy is the countless students, including myself, whom he has inspired to become sociologists. Seeking answers to difficult questions was a double-edged sword in Al Szymanski's short life, but the spirit of this bold and passionate thinker will live on. Regardless of what anyone may have thought of his politics, Szymanski brought eloquence and power to his field, and his work has a provocative message for all who wish to understand oppression, bigotry, and violence. It is important to pay tribute to the contribution made by this prolific scholar. His passion for understanding will live forever.

Mark Nallia-Tone
Senior, sociology

For Al

"In a clearing stands a boxer and a fighter by his trade, And he carries a reminder of every glove that laid him out or cut him till he cried out in his anger and his shame I am leaving I am leaving, But the fighter still remains." — Simon and Garfunkel
Goodbye, we'll miss you. You always made the picket lines.

Jolene Sieinsen
Humanities

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