

Editorial

Measure moralizes at women's expense

Ballot Measure 6 would amend the Oregon Constitution to prohibit state financial medical assistance for abortions. This measure takes the entire abortion debate and applies it to low-income women, but this is not the only reason Measure 6 should be defeated.

The measure is a radical one, allowing state funding of abortions only in cases where a woman's life is jeopardized. This raises the sticky legal questions of how close to death a woman must be to merit state funding of her abortion and who decides the woman's life is threatened.

Current public assistance requires that a doctor certify that the abortion is necessary because pregnancy would endanger the life or physical or emotional health of the woman.

Measure 6 would not allow for abortions in the cases of rape and incest, or if the pregnancy might harm the woman's health, such as causing kidney damage or blindness.

Twelve state-funded abortions in the 1985-86 fiscal year helped confirmed rape victims; the total number of abortions provided to victims of rape or incest is unknown, although some recipients were 12 years old or younger — an indication of child abuse.

Supporters of the measure fear that accessible state funds encourage women to have abortions, and will result in an increasing abortion rate. However, the percentage of pregnant women seeking abortions is approximately the same for women receiving state aid and for those not seeking state aid.

Moreover, the number of state-funded abortions declined in the past year, and is expected to level off soon.

The families using state funding for abortions have monthly incomes between approximately 50 and 85 percent of the national poverty level. They are required to exhaust all other sources of help before receiving aid.

Thus, the people that Measure 6 would affect are exactly those who cannot afford to be the objects of this moral debate.

Twenty percent of women denied state funding for abortions are forced to carry their pregnancies to term — unable to afford an abortion, they must afford to support a child or else put a child they carried for nine months up for adoption. This pregnancy not only has an emotional strain on the mother but increases her health risks.

Some women, faced with this choice, will resort to self-induced abortions.

Oregon maintained its commitment to provide assistance to lower-income women even after the federal government in 1977 prohibited the use of Medicaid funds for abortions except in very limited circumstances.

Funding abortions is only one aspect of state medical assistance, and provides about 10 percent of abortions in Oregon.

This commitment has been a service to Oregonians, and has helped many women who could not otherwise afford abortions. Children must be brought into the best environment possible, and all women need to be able to make the determination of whether to bring a pregnancy to term, though they know there is a heavy emotional toll to abortion.

The ongoing debate about the moral, social and even economic impact of abortion cannot be resolved except by individuals; the woman herself must make the decision. Measure 6 would limit low-income women's freedom to make this decision by tying it to their ability to pay and must therefore be opposed.

Second round of debate should be on Long's turf

The first of two debates between Peter DeFazio and Bruce Long was held last Friday and another is scheduled for next Monday. The two square off to demonstrate their qualifications for the fourth district congressional seat in Washington, D.C.

The debate was heated, but DeFazio had a clear advantage since the debate was held in Harris Hall, where DeFazio sits as a county commissioner. If possible, the two should meet next Monday in a place of Long's choosing.

The Emerald has already endorsed DeFazio for this race, but that doesn't mean the campaign is over. The spirited debate of these candidates provides for one of the more interesting races this fall.

Voters have seen DeFazio at his best and should have the opportunity to see Long at his best.



Letters

Ill-advised

The ODE Oct. 13 headline article concerning former professor Stephen Reynolds was extremely ill-advised and in poor taste. This man has already been found guilty through due process of serious sex crimes; I hardly think it behooves the Emerald to further defame him with past allegations, many of them uncorroborated.

In particular I take exception to the inclusion of the quotation, "There was this weird sexual energy coming from him." This is supposed to be a "sexual abuse" allegation? Will you next be charging a man with rape because someone he never touched thought that he was "real creepy"?

Let Reynolds be punished for his crimes, not for rumors or "psychic" impressions.

Hiawatha
Graduate, Music

Arms control

In response to Dan Goulet's letter on SDI (ODE Oct. 16), several faulty assumptions form the foundation of his SDI defense. First of all, SDI is not "non-nuclear," as the ad-

ministration admits that certain aspects of the program require a nuclear capability.

More importantly, though, is Goulet's narrow view of SDI as being only defensive. The first problem with this argument is that it ignores the distinct possibility that technology that we acquire for this purpose — high-energy laser beams — could also be used for other means aside from SDI. A laser beam that can destroy missiles can certainly also destroy satellites, which are, ironically, crucial to both countries' defense right now. Add the fact that the Christian Science Monitor reports a low-profile group within the defense department feverishly working on weapons that can evade SDI: low projectile missiles, decoys, etc. This could absurdly be called "offensive insurance against defensive insurance that isn't covered."

Finally, even if we take SDI for its stated purpose, if it makes one country invulnerable to attack for a time, this promotes a first-strike since one nation's missiles would work while the other's wouldn't. Of course, Mr. Goulet probably wouldn't object to this as long as we're in the former position.

Thus, if the Russians aren't "serious about arms control," which I tend to agree with more than not, Mr. Goulet has unwittingly joined them.

Scott E. Baldwin
Political science

Correction

Delia Fisher, author of "Disturbing" (ODE, Oct. 20), was incorrectly identified as being an instructor in San Diego; she is an instructor at the University. The author of another letter that did not run is from San Diego.

We apologize for any inconvenience we may have caused.

Endorsements

Because of the large number of letters the Emerald receives around election time, letters endorsing a candidate or position on a ballot measure must be limited to 150 words. Endorsement letters exceeding this limit will be edited for length.

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