

Editorial

Measures bring end to nuclear support

In order to cease our inadvertent involvement in the arms buildup and potential war, Lane County Ballot Measure 18 would make Lane County an official nuclear-free zone, and City Measure 51 would stop production of nuclear parts or their components in Eugene.

Both these measures merit support.

For the same reason we support Measure 16 -- conversion from nuclear parts production on a statewide basis -- we support it in Eugene. The economic impact is small compared to the message that Eugene will not support or tolerate nuclear proliferation.

Measure 18, the county nuclear-free zone initiative, would ban testing, maintenance production or storage of nuclear weapons or wastes in Lane County. Measure 51 goes further for Eugene, banning military defense systems, nuclear-war planning, nuclear-power production, disposal of nuclear waste and the transportation of nuclear waste or nuclear weapons systems through Eugene.

Measure 51 also creates an elected three-member board to oversee compliance with the measure.

Nine other Oregon counties already have nuclear-free zones, so Lane County would be adding its support to this statewide effort. Moreover, its efforts would be combined with those of the 3,260 communities nationwide that have established the zones.

Production or acceptance of nuclear arms or nuclear waste is simply not a business that Lane County should be involved in -- nor should anyone else; vote yes on Ballot Measures 18 and 51.

Measure provides laws protecting victims' rights

The victims'-rights measure, Ballot Measure 10, introduces a number of provisions for enhancing the rights of those who have suffered from crime. We support this measure.

Another victims'-rights measure failed by a narrow margin in the 1984 election. Unlike the previous measure, Measure 10 is truly geared toward the victim rather than the prosecutor -- the power of the prosecutor is expanded in the courtroom, but the victim benefits most.

This bill expands the definition of a victim of crime to include anyone who has suffered social, psychological or physical harm from a crime. It also increases the range of crimes for which victims may receive compensation.

The measure protects the privacy and safety of victims; addresses of victim or witnesses will be kept private unless the defendant shows a good cause for releasing them. If contacting the victim, the defense attorney must clearly identify who is calling.

The measure also requires the judge to hold a hearing if a defendant threatens the victim. The judge may then increase bail or revoke the defendant's pretrial release.

The measure also eases the burden on a victim by giving a victim greater power in seeking joint trials for multiple defendants, reducing the number of times the victim must appear in court. This reduces the fear many victims face of long, painful trials.

It would allow prosecutors to excuse the same number of potential jurors as the defense attorney, instead of half as many, as it is now.

It allows the victim to speak at sentencing and at the defendant's parole hearing. All victims would be notified when the defendant is released on parole. It increases the length of parole, including a mandatory three years of active supervision.

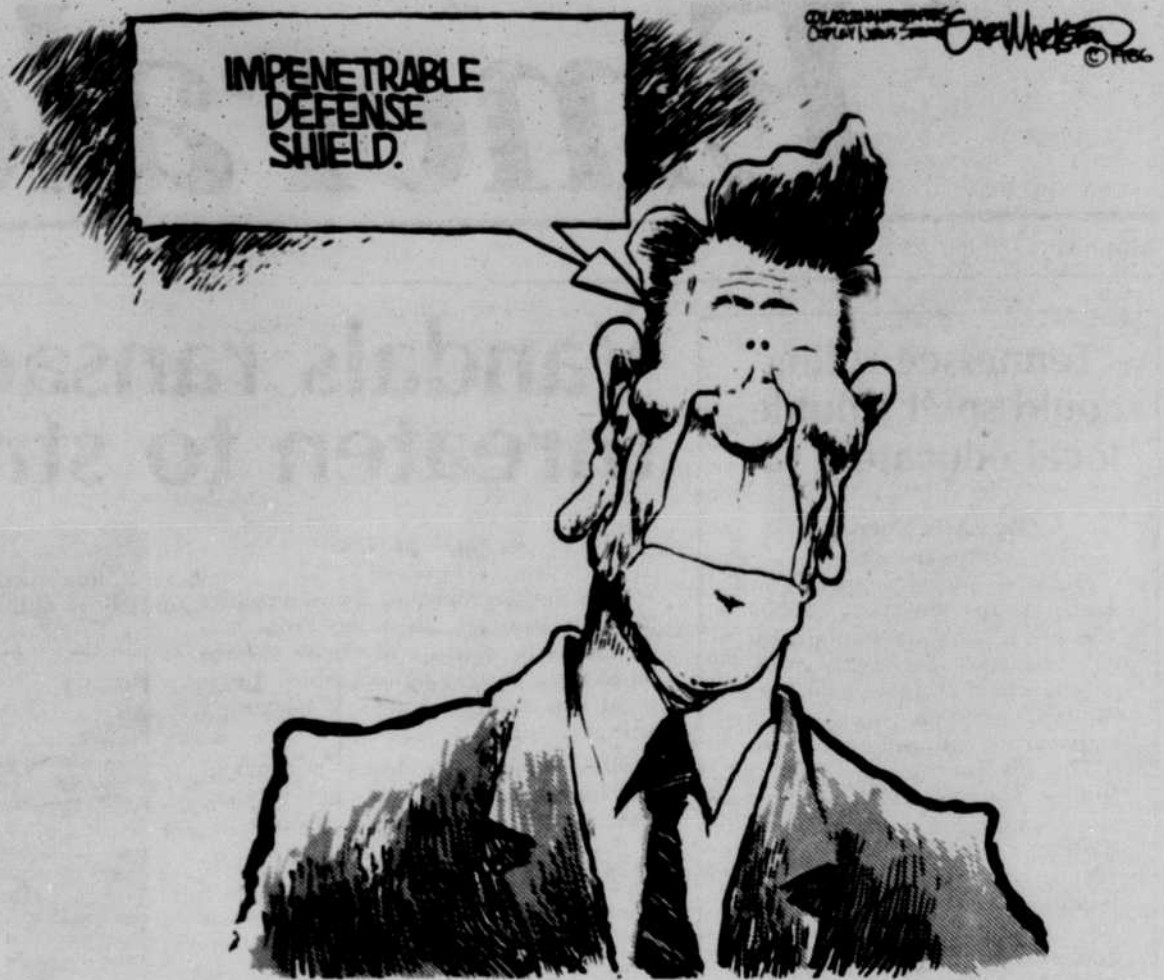
Some of these provisions may mean trials, sentences and parole hearings will be longer and cost more, but the cost is clearly outweighed by the benefit to victims of crime.

This measure strikes a balance in the ongoing interpretation of the American criminal system. Though some fear it erodes the rights of the accused, the courts must protect the privacy and safety of the victims of crime as well.

Opponents argue that the individual items of this measure should be debated and approved in the legislature; we feel the reverse is true -- that victims' rights must be established first, then the legislative process can go from there.

In certain cases, such as assault or rape, a trial can be just as painful for the victim as was the crime. In any case, victims need protection and an increased ability to speak to avoid becoming victims of the court system.

Vote yes on Measure 10.



Measures would avert jail space crisis

Adding jail space to the county corrections system is the aim of measures 19 and 20; these measures are designed to relieve the jail space crisis in Lane County and should be passed.

However, creating more jail space is, in the long term, a bad solution to fighting crime. Once the crisis is settled, the state should seek alternative corrections options to prevent future jail shortages.

The crisis occurred when 809 inmates were released because of a court order requiring that the old Lane County jail be closed and some inmates be released from the current jail.

Of those released, 119 have been re-arrested, two for kidnapping and one for rape.

The measures would expand the current jail and create other correction alternatives, providing 224 additional spaces for the Lane County corrections systems. It would also create a 20-person Mental Health Emergency Unit, a short-term facility to house people who have mental illnesses and are judged to be a threat to others or themselves.

In the long term, the county must seek alternatives to imprisonment in order to break the cycle of crime and jail that caused the problem in the first place.

Vote yes on measures 19 and 20; in the short term, these measures are essential to ending the jail space shortage that is crippling Lane County law enforcement, forcing it to put inmates back on the streets prematurely.

Registration restrictions unnecessary

Ballot Measure 13 would amend the Oregon Constitution to eliminate voter registration in the last 20 days before an election; currently, a voter may register up to the day before the election.

The measure would restrict voter registration, and thus turnout, because of an imagined threat of voter fraud; it is a bad measure and should be defeated.

In 1984, 65,000 voters registered in the

last 20 days before the election; these people would not have been able to vote under Measure 13 -- anyone who moves, marries or changes his or her name in the 20 days before the election would also be ineligible.

Oregon consistently boasts one of the highest voter-turnout rates in the nation; this measure would dampen this strength of the state. Vote no on Measure 13.

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