

Results of measures both good and bad

This year's ballot measure results offered few surprises, some disappointments, and otherwise some fairly good news.

The rejection of Ballot Measure 5, the Oregon Marijuana Initiative, was expected, but supporters can take heart in the numbers favoring this disputed measure.

Measure 6, the controversial measure that would have ended state-funded abortions, fortunately was defeated. The defeat means low-income women, continue to have support in seeking safe, legal abortions; but like Measure 5, the abortion issue will no doubt resurface in subsequent elections.

It was welcome news to see all four property tax limitation measures soundly rejected. Of the four, Measure 7, the sales tax measure, was defeated by the widest margin — close to 80 percent of the voters opposed this measure.

Measure 7 would have imposed a 5 percent sales tax; its overwhelming defeat should send a signal to its supporters that a sales tax will never fly in Oregon.

Defeat of Measure 9, the property tax limitation proposal, came as a relief to city and county services, as well as public schools. This measure would have hit an already weak public school system. Its defeat shows that Oregonians are concerned about the future well-being of education.

Measures 11 and 12 would have reduced property tax by roughly 40 percent, requiring the lost revenue to come from a shift in income tax brackets. These measures, as well as Measure 9, were strongly opposed by public officials and labor unions and it was their public awareness campaigns that helped squash these potentially damaging proposals.

The worst news to University students and voters in general came with the passage of Measure 13. It requires that Oregonians must register to vote at least 20 days before an election. Voters were formerly allowed to register up to 5 p.m. the day before an election.

Its supporters claimed that it would ensure against the kind of voter fraud associated with the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh cult in Wasco County. Yet the Bhagwan affair was an isolated incident which then-Secretary of State Norma Paulus averted.

The Lane County Election office recorded about 1,275 voters who registered the day before the election, with a sizable minority of voters registering 20 days before Nov. 3. The success of Measure 13 could disenfranchise a large number of potential voters.

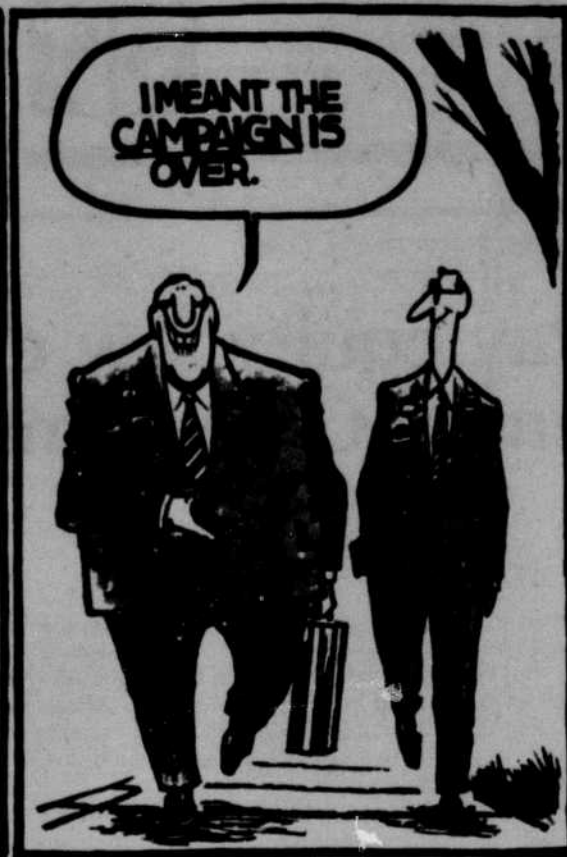
Oregon's voter turnout was above the national average this election; this measure puts that distinction in jeopardy.

The three nuclear measures, 14, 15 and 16, were defeated, and it should not have escaped anyone's notice that the opposition spent large amounts of money to ensure these measures were defeated.

Aside from the sheer volume of dollars spent against these measures, the opponents of measures 14, 15 and 16 succeeded in convincing voters that passing these measures would be harmful to the economy.

If the economy picks up, there will be no reason to stop similar measures in the future.

The most baffling measure results were the two local prison expansion proposals, measures 19 and 20. By passing Measure 19, Lane County residents showed support for increasing jail space and building new facilities, yet did not want to pay for them. Without the funding provided by Measure 20, which failed, the jails will not be improved nor expanded, and the future of jail space remains as uncertain as before the election.



Letters

Pillow talk

When President Reagan appeared on television to discuss the recent non-summit, dinner was put on the back burner in this household, and we grabbed our pillows and headed for the couch.

We know what kind of show the president can put on, with his duplicitous rhetoric and patriotic blah-blah. We would also be treated to a string of purposeful misstatements that probably went unnoticed by listeners more faithful than we.

Reagan's claim that SDI would be non-nuclear is patently false. In fact, the dependency of the SDI research program on nuclear tests may be partly responsible for the U.S.'s refusal to join the USSR in a testing moratorium.

We adjusted our pillows. We next heard that the USSR's Krasnoyarsk radar system is in violation of the ABM treaty. The last issue of the respectable quarterly Foreign Policy puts that one to rest, too. But who reads Foreign Policy?

The president droned on about "freedom", "human rights" and every other buzz word certain to arouse popular support. We held onto our pillows more tightly as he explained that the SDI "peace shield" is purely defensive, so

the Soviets have nothing to fear. But a shield is something behind which one hides a sword, so the Soviets' suspicions seem reasonable.

By the time the show ended, our knuckles had grown white from clutching the pillows, and we threw our faces into them, letting out a series of sustained screams. It is the only way to survive watching such a spectacle.

Dennis Lueck
Eugene

The Supreme Court of the United States has ruled that the right to life begins well after the moment of conception and ends at the moment of execution of a legal death sentence. If Mr. Moore wishes to alter these arrangements, he must have recourse to legislative authorities, not "scientific" ones.

Jerome Berryhill
GTF physics

Cruel irony

I find it a cruel irony that advocates for abortion seem to express concern for poor women and their problems by suggesting that they have their unborn children killed.

In attempting to solve any of life's real problems, including injustice, economic and personal hardships, there are moral considerations that restrict how we may solve them.

For instance, the parents of a three year-old who find themselves unable to cope with parenting are not morally free to shoot the child. While this action would solve their problem, it would be at the expense of their child's life and their own humanity.

Similarly, killing the child at some earlier stage of development, such as before birth, would also solve some problems, but be equally wrong.

A woman who finds herself facing a crisis pregnancy should know that there are many people and agencies that will gladly help her and her child. Living expenses, medical costs, adoption services, parenting classes, babysitting, transportation and more are available to her from people who genuinely care. Birthright of Eugene is one such group.

Women should not have to live with the grief and guilt of having consented to and participated in the destruction of their child's life. Let us care for the poor in ways that really help them — not by making it easy to choose to kill their children.

William Moore
Music

Right to life

In his Oct. 28 letter, William Moore quotes U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop as follows: "Biologists take the uniform position that life begins at conception; there is no logical reason why the pro-abortionist should try to arrive at a different definition when he is talking about people..."

In fact, biologists are well aware that the life cycles of many — perhaps most — organisms do not contain any event remotely comparable to conception.

Are bacteria alive? You may not think so, but most biologists certainly do. The most charitable view that one may take of Dr. Koop's claim is that it was delivered after insufficient reflection.

In any case, the opinions of biologists have no bearing on the legal and moral question of the rights of individuals. Rights exist by law or are discovered by moral reasoning: They are not "facts", as Mr. Moore would have us believe.

Letters Policy

The Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing fair comment on topics of interest to the University community.

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