

Speaker advocates presidential veto limits

By Jay Wilber
Of the Emerald

To combat "wide and ever-widening presidential power," Congress needs to disarm and severely limit presidential veto power. Those were the sentiments expressed Wednesday night by visiting Columbia University law Professor Charles Black in a speech at the Eugene Community Conference Center.

Black currently holds the Wayne Morris Chair of Law and Politics at the University. Wednesday's speech was part of a weeklong series of lectures celebrating the bicentennial of the U.S. Constitution.

In his speech titled "Reflections on Teaching and Working in Constitutional Law," Black detailed the elaborate process currently necessary to override presidential veto. He said "the discouragement is daunting" to those in Congress trying to override a veto. The two-thirds majority in the House and Senate is often too difficult to attain once a president has disapproved a bill.

"The procedure is just so loaded in the president's favor," Black said.

Black offers a solution that could repair some of the structural problems he sees in the relationship between Congress and the president. He suggests requiring a two-thirds majority of a quorum (the necessary minimum number of legislators present at an assembly) to override a veto rather than

of the full houses.

Such a plan could be instituted in specific cases by a bipartisan committee in Congress, he said. In addition, no constitutional change would be needed, he said. If the new arrangement proved unworkable or too unpopular, it could simply be dismantled, he said.

To illustrate the intimidating strength of presidential power, Black recalled the Lend-Lease Act of 1940. As the fighting in Europe intensified, President Franklin Roosevelt traded 50 naval destroyers to Great Britain for several British military bases in the West Indies and elsewhere.

Feeling he had betrayed the United States' isolationist policy, Congress tried to take action. They failed in the face of Roosevelt's claim of presidential power.

"People go on about the imperial presidency of Nixon," Black said. "But somehow the things he did seem rather mild now."

Black then provided a more recent example. He referred to President Reagan's mining of Nicaraguan harbors and the difficulty Congress faced in trying to reverse that policy decision.

As Black sees it, the constitutional definition of presidential power is flawed because "the president is the first authority in determining his power."

As to whether any change in the rela-



Charles Black

tionship between Congress and the president is likely in the near future, Black is realistic.

"I know it won't happen this year, this isn't the time," Black said. "But maybe 10 years hence, after a third disastrous presidency, something will change."

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City Council expresses intent to avoid property tax increases

If the Eugene City Council has its way, voters won't have to worry about property tax increases if they pass a \$5.83 million bond measure March 31 to pay their share of the Mahlon Sweet Airport expansion.

The City Council on Wednesday unanimously approved an ordinance expressing its intent to exhaust other revenue sources before raising property taxes to finance the annual debt service on the bond measure.

The council decided in January to place the measure before the voters to finance the public share of the total \$18.3 million cost for the airport expansion.

Ordinarily, when voters pass a general obligation bond, additional property taxes must be levied beyond the tax base to support the annual debt service,

Council favors other sources to pay airport expansion bond's debt service

said Finance Director Warren Wong. The ordinance passed Wednesday expresses the council's intent to first use a series of existing or new revenue sources before increasing property taxes, however, he said.

New funding sources include profit from airport operations, new airport-related revenue, funds available from the growth factor in the General Fund Working Capital and funds available from reallocation of the Capital Improvements Budget.

The council would resort to increasing property taxes only if these other sources proved inadequate, Wong said.

In other business, the City Council approved a 45 percent increase in the commercial rental rate for the Silva Concert Hall at the Hult Center for the Performing Arts. The rate went from \$1,200 to \$1,750.

Bob Schutz, the Hult Center's executive director, made the proposal and said the increase "would bring us into a competitive mode, particularly with the Portland performing arts centers."

The rate increase, which would not apply to non-commercial area arts organizations, is equivalent to about 70 cents a seat, Schutz said. The increase is the first since 1980, he added.

Et al.

MEETINGS

The Hult Center Performing Arts Commission Long Range Planning Committee will meet Friday at noon in the Hult Center Conference Room.

LECTURES

"Gorbachev's Dilemma of Power" is the topic of a lecture by Russian historian and University alumnus Alexander Riasanovsky today at 3:30 in the Shiomi Room 128 at the Chiles Business Center.

MISCELLANEOUS

The Office of Academic Advising and Student Services will offer drop-in advising for spring scheduling today and Friday from 10 to 4 in Room 164 Oregon Hall. The office is also offering pre-med scholarship information. Call Marliss Strange at 686-3211 for information.

Australian Studies and the English department creative writing program will present a

reading by Michael Wilding, Australian novelist and short-story writer, Friday at 3:30 in 360 Condon.

The EMU Craft Center is registering students for spring term workshops on the ground floor of the EMU.

Deadline for submitting Et als

to the Emerald front desk, 300 EMU, is noon the day before publication. Et als are run only once. Events with a donation or admission charge will not be accepted. Events occurring nearest the publication date and campus events will be given priority.

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