

Decision to divest should be approved

The State Board of Higher Education deserves a pat on the back for its decision to re-affirm its ten-year old policy to divest funds from companies in South Africa.

The decision shows the divestment issue is not dead despite the lengthy law suit brought on ten years ago when the Attorney General declared the Board did not have the authority to order divestiture. The Attorney General said the decision violated the state's "prudent investor rule."

The ASUO and Portland State University filed a suit against this decision. A lower court ruled the board did have the authority to instruct divestiture but, because of the prudent investor rule, it would be unlawful if it was carried out. This decision was overruled in the Oregon Court of Appeals and recently the Oregon Supreme Court refused to hear the case.

Bill Lemman, the Executive Vice Chancellor, said it puts the Board back at square one. With the Oregon Supreme Court's decision it is as if the court suits had never been filed, he said.

The Board's new affirmation against South African investments must now get the Attorney General's approval. If he agrees, the Board can begin to divest.

We encourage the Attorney General to approve the Board's decision. Obviously it is a worthwhile cause that the Board and students throughout the state are dedicated to.

But another solution lies in a legislative bill aimed at divestment from South African companies. If the legislature passed such a bill, the Attorney General's opinion would not be necessary.

Civil rights supported in seat belt bill defeat

The Oregon House took a stand in favor of civil liberties when it defeated the mandatory seat belt bill last Thursday. This is the second time in two years that the House has defeated a seat belt bill after it passed in the Senate with wide support.

Supporters of the bill now hope to send the idea to the voters. This would be a waste of time and money. Oregonians have expressed their opposition to the measure in the past.

Rep. Bob Brogoitti said, "Our correspondence has been overwhelmingly, 'Let us have our freedom.'" To put it on the ballot after this strong opposition would be like beating a dead horse. One of the main appeals of the bill was that it would save money in insurance rates. Trying to put the bill on the ballot theoretically would defeat this purpose.

Currently 26 states have seat belt laws. Oregon has a law requiring everyone under 16 to wear a seat belt. But these laws violate our freedom of choice and are an infringement on our civil liberties.

Studies have shown that wearing seat belts saves lives. But it should be up to the individual to decide whether or not to wear one. No one but the individual would be hurt if a belt was not worn in an accident.

It is not the role of government to save us from our own stupidity. Seat belts are designed to "protect us from ourselves," said Rep. Bernie Agrons.



Letters

Lethal traits

Often we're concerned by cultural challenges within our society. We claim concession of races, religions, and sexes. Why not homosexuality?

These are grievous cultural issues, yet how are we to choose without being prejudiced or ethnocentric?

Anthropologist John W. Bennett and sociologist Melvin M. Tumin have outlined six functional prerequisites of a society:

1. Maintain the biological function of the group members.
2. Reproduce new members for the group.
3. Socialize new members into functioning adults.
4. Produce goods and services necessary to life.
5. Maintain order within the group, and between itself and outsiders.
6. Define the "meaning of life," and maintain the motivation to survive and engage in the activities necessary to survival.

E. Adamson Hoebel stated "Societies that invent and do not control lethal customs are doomed." Distinguishing socially lethal customs as such

without bias is critical.

To tolerate a given trait, like homosexuality, we must first ask ourselves; is this culture healthy, does it reproduce itself, do its members function well as adults, are they a productive people, does this group act and react well with itself and others, and does it foster survival and the activities that assure reproduction.

If a group is destructive to any of the basic functions of a society, it can be lethal.

Looking at cultures equally is important. Prejudice is an intolerable part of society. Speaking out against lethal traits is not prejudice, not ethnocentric, it's survival.

Larry Farris
Business major

Deadly grapes

To the Carson dining hall purchasers: We asked before in a "suggestion" if you would boycott grapes.

You replied, "No, but you may." Well, we do, but the only thing that does is leave extra grapes at the end of a meal. The only people who hear our message are those who work in Carson and they have little or no impact on the grape industry.

Grapes are not the only issue here. The question is; are we going to support an industry that allows its workers to die of cancer? Are we going to give our money to "big business" that puts capital gain before the rights of humans?

We are screaming "No!" and

all you're doing is saying, "It's OK to say no, in fact, do it, but we won't join you."

You need to pass our message on to the grape growers by talking in the only language they understand — money. And it is "our" money — those of us who pay to eat in Carson are paying for the grapes we do not want to eat, and thus involuntarily supporting the deaths of people.

Please take our suggestion more seriously than, "Why do you salt your eggs?" We do not want left-over grapes in Carson — we want left-over grapes in California so that the growers get the message that we will not support virtual murder in the name of fresh fruit.

By the way, some grape growers do not use deadly pesticides. Why don't you find out who they are and buy grapes from them?

Lynn Kilpatrick
Mari Shirazi

Look, a unicorn

Concerning "Good faith," the letter written by Brandon Shepard and printed in the ODE Thursday, April 9.

You have convinced me! One does not need proof in order to believe something! Since reading your argument and being astounded by its penetrating and utterly irrefutable logic, I, like you, now believe in unicorns.

Fred Roellig
Freshman

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