

Mandatory testing bill draws strong criticism

By B.J. Thomsen
Of the Emerald

A controversial bill that passed the Oregon Senate 21-9 on Monday is drawing strong criticism from many groups around the state.

Senate Bill 994 would reinstate the mandatory blood-test requirement for couples seeking a marriage license.

The requirement of a mandatory blood test to obtain a marriage license was repealed in 1983 because of a perceived lack of a need for the test, according to Dr. Jim Jackson, the director of the University Student Health Center.

The test at that time was used to detect syphilis and gonorrhea in couples applying for marriage licenses. In the current bill, however, a test for the AIDS virus also would be included.

The bill in its current form would allow the Oregon State Health Division to test couples for whatever sexually transmitted disease they deemed appropriate, according to Chuck Johnson, a legislative assistant to the primary sponsor of the bill, Rep. Jan Wyers, D-Portland.

The Health Division does not support the bill, however.

Kristine Gebbie, the administrator of the Health Division, said no responsible health organization in the United States supports mandatory testing for the AIDS virus. She also noted that no other state requires marriage license applicants to take the AIDS test.

"I think the bill subjects people to substantial expense and intrusion that will yield little information about AIDS," Gebbie said.

This is because the population buying marriage licenses are not likely to be infected with the virus at this point in the disease's development, Gebbie said. Therefore, mandatory testing is not a cost-effective way to combat the disease, she said.

Dave Fidanque of the Eugene office of the American Civil Liberties Union said his organization opposes the legislation.

"It's a misappropriation of resources, very scarce resources, to a population that is not at risk, or at very high risk, of getting AIDS," he said.

The bill would require couples getting married to bear the brunt of the cost, as much as \$320 by Health Division estimates and as little as \$15 per couple, according to Wyers' office.

This disparity has come about, Johnson said, because the State Health Division has figured the cost for all sexually transmitted disease tests. The figure from Wyers' office is only for the AIDS test.

Because applicants will pay for the test, Fidanque calls the bill an indirect tax on marriage.

The cost of administering the test to couples too needy to pay could cost the state \$600,000, Gebbie said. The Health Division expects to receive about \$1.5 million from the state general fund and another \$1 million in federal aid, she said.

Wyers introduced the bill primarily because the disease is now beginning to move out of high-risk populations, Johnson said. Mandatory testing will

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Smoothing out the stress

Jake Harris (left), a licensed massage therapist, helps Slesha Njendo (center) relax through massage while Saleem Farooqui, a visiting geologist from Portland, unbends his muscles on a back swing during massage-therapy demonstrations Tuesday in the EMU lobby.

Photo by Sherlyn Bjorkgren

ODE announces 1986-87 staff

The Oregon Daily Emerald management announced its selections for next year's staff Tuesday.

When the Emerald resumes full production next fall, it faces some changes in the staff structure. Editor Stanley Nelson has combined some of the associate editor positions and added 10 new reporter positions. This is to allow for more comprehensive coverage, he said.

"Requiring the associate editors to write four or five stories a week (the current requirement) oftentimes doesn't

allow them to look at an issue beyond the surface," Nelson said.

Helping Nelson hire the staff were Eden Godbey, the 1987-88 news editor, and Scott Maben, the new managing editor.

Angela Muniz will retain her position as co-editorial page editor and joining her is Stephen Hoenisch.

Lucinda Dillon, currently completing a year as managing editor, will shift to covering sports. The two new reporters

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Local police forces share duties with canine partners

By Jackie Barry
Of the Emerald

Man's best friend takes a bite out of crime where humans can't compete — in an area where sense of smell, selfless loyalty and single-minded fearlessness makes the dog excel.

These qualities, coupled with a drive to work, make some dogs trainable for ferreting out hard-to-find suspects: drugs and bombs.

The Eugene and Springfield police departments each have four such canines on their rosters — pure-bred German Shepherd dogs or Shepherd mixes. They were added to the police force during the 1980s.

Although not officially recognized as officers, the dogs assist their counterparts in a partner-like fashion. "They can do so much more than an ordinary man," Lane County Sheriff's Deputy J.R. Frost says. Frost patrolled with the sheriff department's only working canines, which he owns, for parts of 1985 and 1986 when he was reassigned.

Training for most of the dogs is for tracking of human beings only. Two of Springfield's canines also can lead officers to marijuana stashes. Sniffing out other drugs hasn't met with much success, according to Springfield officer Rod Harrison, much to the disappointment of law enforcers, who say methamphetamine causes more law enforcement problems than marijuana.

Lane County dogs also are not trained to find bombs. Frost says success in this area is so important he thinks a dog should be trained to perform only this task.

According to a January 1986 Smithsonian article, there are two reasons a dog's sense of smell exceeds the capabilities of this human sense.

Olfactory cells do the smelling in all mammals. Human olfactory cells cover a small one-inch-long area high in the nose. Dogs have longer noses and many more cells. Bloodhounds have the most, with as many as 150 square centimeters of nostril area covered by olfactory cells.

Also, the article states, human evolution has resulted in their brains suppressing conscious recognition of an odor, making humans conscious of other things supposedly contributing to higher intelligence.

Local tracking dogs use their strong sense of smell to distinguish disturbances in vegetation. They smell skin cells shed on the track; humans normally shed 50 million per day, according to the Smithsonian article. Frost says the dogs also pick up the smell of emotions such as fear, which roll off the body in waves.

Dogs can find things that aren't visible, they can run faster than humans, and police Sgt. Alan Carlson, who heads Springfield's canine corps, says dogs don't respond or react to arguments and name calling.

"They've been incredibly efficient," Sgt. Tim McCarthy, community affairs director for Eugene's emergency services, says.

McCarthy pinpoints a recent burglary attempt at St. Vincent de Paul. He says the burglar tried to hide in a large back storage lot that was "easily as littered as an auto wrecking yard. We were never going to find him... and the dog went right to him in a matter of seconds."

In the days before dogs began sniffing out hard-to-find suspects, McCarthy says, as a supervisor he

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Photo by Jackie Barry

Springfield Police Officer Rod Harrison takes his half-breed partner Liberty on a building search.