

# Bill limiting campaign contributions introduced

By Don Peters  
Emerald Associate Editor

Dismayed by rising costs in election campaigns, Rep. Mike Burton (D-Portland) Thursday proposed a bill to limit campaign contributions and spending.

Burton outlined his bill in a morning press conference. Legislative Council (LC) 457 is a

campaign reform measure for legislative and statewide cam-



paigns, and should be presented to the House some time dur-

ing the next few weeks. (LC is the notation assigned to proposals before they are assigned House or Senate titles.)

If passed, the legislation will place higher restrictions for contributions on political action committees (PACs), corporations, labor unions, political parties and individuals. It also prohibits contributions between candidates, contribu-

tions between PACs, and contributions between candidates and PACs.

In addition, the measure would impose a "voluntary" spending limit on candidates. Under federal laws, a stricter spending limit would be illegal, but candidates who chose to ignore the limit would have that information printed in the voters' guide.

"I proposed the bill because I think the public is losing accessibility to political office," Burton said. "Oregon politics is fairly clean and I want to keep it that way. Money just adds to the sleaze factor."

The bill closely resembles one Burton proposed during the 1987 Legislative session, HB3184. The bill never came up to vote in the House.

"It (HB3184) got a courtesy hearing in the House State and Federal Affairs committee, and they pocketed it," Burton said. "I didn't expect that much backing last time, but this time I do."

This time Burton has amassed a formidable list of allies. The list includes some of the largest corporations in Oregon, a major lobbying group, and three fellow representatives: Ron Cease (D-Portland), Carl Hosticka (D-Eugene) and Bob Pickard (D-Bend).

Campaign finances is just the first of a series of bills Burton

will present under a title of "Legislature Reform Package." Upcoming measures include one that would set annual sessions of the Oregon Legislature, instead of the present biannual sessions.

If passed, the bill would require legislators to meet in January of every odd-numbered year to organize, adjourn, and reconvene every March. The bill would also limit congressional sessions to 100 days.

Other initiatives include one that would increase the term of state representatives to four years; another that would limit all state office holders to two terms; and another that would change the way legislators are paid.

"If we don't get a response from the legislature, we're fully prepared to take the measure to the people in the form of an initiative," Burton said.

Senate President John Kitzhaber announced his committee appointments late Tuesday, and as in the House, local legislators garnered top positions.

Grattan Kerans, District 21 senator, is chairman the Senate Labor Committee, and serve on Agriculture and Natural Resources and Telecommunications and Consumer Affairs Committee.

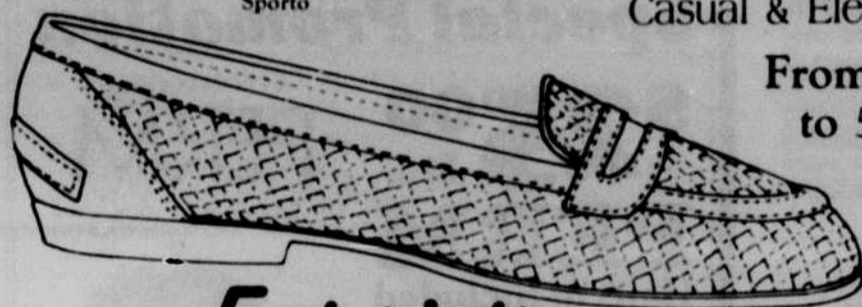
District 22 Senator Larry Hill gave his chairmanship on labor to Kerans, picking up a spot on the influential Ways and Means Committee instead. Hill's SB355, raising the state minimum wage level, will be presented to the Senate sometime during the next few weeks.

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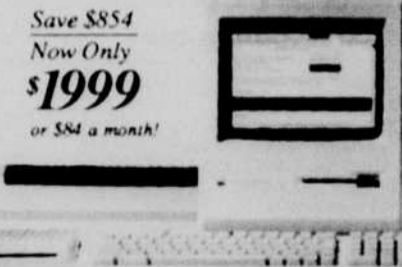
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