

Closing polls early would insult voters

Admittedly, watching last November's presidential election was like watching a Mike Tyson prize fight. The heavy favorite scored a TKO in the fourth round. If you're a fan, you're disappointed. But you don't change the rules of the bout to make it go 15 rounds.

In Washington, D.C. last week, for the third time in four years, the House once again has approved a uniform poll closing act to solve the "problem" of foregone elections. The bill goes before the Senate soon, where it deserves to be scuttled again.

The idea is that early network projections of a winner discourage voter turnout in the West. For example, in 1988, CBS called a Bush victory just as folks were sitting down to dinner out here. By closing the polls at the same time in the continental United States, there would be no reason for Western voters to skip the election.

Under the House plan, polls would close at 9 p.m. on the East Coast, but voting out here would end at 7 p.m. Presently, voting goes until 8 p.m. in Oregon.

But by closing the voting boxes out here, Congress is doing us no favors. Passage of this act will actually decrease the amount of time citizens have to vote, and common sense tells us that you can't increase voter turnout at the same time you're not giving people opportunities to cast their ballots.

Besides that, the poll act is one giant insult. It insults the intelligence of Western voters. Most people around the country figured before November that Bush was going to win. "Doonesbury" declared the contest decided six weeks before the election.

This act is also an insult to the citizens of Alaska and Hawaii, who aren't included in the act. It isn't that nobody cares if they find out early who our next president is; it's that our leaders realize that closing the polls at 5 p.m. is a bad idea for the same reasons as closing polls early out here.

Finally, the bill is an insult to the political muscle of the West. "The importance of Western votes for president is being diminished just because of where we live," claims Rep. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.).

Wyden seems to have forgotten that California is on the West Coast; until that state and its huge tally of electoral votes slides into the ocean, no candidate is going to overlook those of us on Pacific time.

It would be nice to have an exciting presidential race for a change. But let's not saddle ourselves with an unnecessary, confusing piece of legislation in the hunt for cheap thrills.



State 'White House' becomes white elephant

Sometimes, there's just no excusing a broken promise. This is one of those times.

Amid much public apology and shuffling of feet, the legislature backed down and appropriated \$88,702 for maintenance and improvements to the governor's mansion. This occurred even though the group of private citizens who pushed for a governor's mansion two years ago promised that no public funds would be necessary for the building.

Now, our lawmakers and certain media sources (such as the Eugene Register-Guard, April 4) are telling us there was no choice, that the legislature had to cough up the bucks for the mansion. And we're being told that upkeep of state-owned buildings has always been the state's responsibility.

To be sure, the state got a good deal on the mansion in 1987. In the past, Oregon governors have had to rent private or state-owned homes at a cost to the taxpayers. Realizing that a state mansion would be a good long-term investment that would allow the governor to entertain important guests, Medford attorney Otto Frohnmayer (related to

state attorney general Dave Frohnmayer) led the successful fund-raising drive that located a 12,000-square-foot structure and got it at a bargain price.

In fact, the fund-raising drive was so successful at first that it was announced that a "perpetual care fund" could be set up to keep up the place. Now it seems as if Frohnmayer was a little hasty; expectations have outstripped performances, and it falls to the state to bail them out.

Wrong.

At a time when other state agencies are either tightening their belts or learning how to get by with what they've got, it seems wrong for the state to take the burden of something it really didn't ask for to begin with. The state has inherited somebody else's problem.

And it would seem wrong for this precedent to be established. When contributions for the mansion don't measure up next time, you can bet that there will be less hesitation in the legislature to pay up then. Hopefully, the state will have the money for it at that time. It doesn't now.

Letters

SPA for women

It has always bothered me that on a campus as richly diverse as the University of Oregon, student government is usually run by one specific group of people — namely, men. There are 73 candidates in this year's ASUO elections, only 18 of whom are women. As a woman, this seems to me a huge disparity and a huge problem.

Students for a Progressive Agenda (SPA) has always fought for greater diversity of representation in student government, and this year is no exception.

In most cases, the SPA ticket offers the concerned student voter the only non-male or non-white choice of candidate, and in three crucially important races, SPA is the only ticket which offers women candidates.

In the EMU Board two-year seat race, there are six candidates, only one of whom (SPA endorsed candidate Mariko Shirazi) is a woman. In the vital Incidental Fees Committee

one-year race, there are 17 candidates. Only two (Tonija L. Swires and Elizabeth Neely) are women, and both women are SPA candidates. And in the most important race of all, the presidential/vice presidential race, the SPA ticket offers the only female candidate, Maureen Kirk.

This campus, which is so diverse, deserves and should demand diverse representation from its student government. Besides offering candidates with experience and fierce commitment to activism, the SPA ticket offers, nearly exclusively, candidates with diverse backgrounds and genders. And I'm sure we can all agree that diversity is something vital to this campus.

Vote SPA on April 19 and 20!

Mary Koroloff
Candidate
EMU Board one-year seat

BARN

Included here is a brief summary of the "Late 20th Century

BARN Raising," a proposal which invites participation in establishing Basically an Agricultural Resource Network.

The BARN mission statement is "to provide a place to begin for people who want to re-discover the good and simple life."

The goals of a local BARN are to:

- help maintain a common goal for local communities: eating healthy locally grown food
- help maintain food production systems and related support systems which are interdependent locally and with other regions, and therefore offer stable employment capable of withstanding most foreseeable natural disasters
- help orient children towards responsible community goals at an earlier age, and help indicate more clearly how they may develop their unique abilities to contribute to these common community goals
- help establish and maintain local agriculture-based villages which may then serve as simple models for whole economic and environmental systems evaluation.

A local BARN will help accomplish these goals on a day-to-day basis by being 1) an information exchange center; 2) the location for a Community Journal reference guide; 3) a meeting place; 4) a bulletin board networking center; and, 5) a sponsor of related meetings and educational events.

A computer would be located at each local BARN, and any information which would be valuable to all local BARNs in the designated region could be processed and cleared through the regional BARN computer database.

Funding for local BARNs could be accomplished through membership fees associated with use of the bulletin board networking service.

Stefan Pasti
Junction City

Committed

This letter is in response to the ASUO Presidential debate that occurred April 6, which

was sponsored by the Greek system. For those who were unable to attend it was an excellent portrayal of the differences between the three tickets. Tim Hughes and Maureen Kirk, by far, gave the superior responses as advocates of students' and Greeks' rights. Perhaps the most clear example of this was when the Hughes/Kirk ticket stated they would definitely reject and fight a hypothetical attempt by the University administration to force disclosure of financial statements by the Greek houses (now protected by law). This pronouncement and defense of students' rights, whatever the legitimate organization, clearly shows that the Hughes/Kirk ticket and their endorsers — Students for a Progressive Agenda — are not a "special interest political machine." Rather they are a student organization committed to preserving and expanding the role of students in the education process.

Phil Nebergall
Student senate candidate
seat No. 2
Tuesday, April 11, 1989