

Allow children the use of TV testimony

Last year, the Oregon Legislature passed a law which allowed sexually abused children to testify in court via closed-circuit television. Now, the future of that law is in the hands of the U.S. Supreme Court.

On Tuesday, the Supreme Court agreed to hear a Maryland case, in which a day care operator was convicted of several counts of sexual abuse against children in the center. The children were allowed to testify against her by a closed-circuit television.

The Maryland courts overturned the original conviction last July, saying in part the television testimony infringed on the defendant's right to face her accusers, which is contained in a clause of the Sixth Amendment to the Constitution.

Maryland and Oregon have similar laws. Both allow victimized children to testify privately in front of the defense and prosecuting attorneys. The proceedings are taped and shown live to defendants and jurors in the courtroom. In Oregon, children under 10 are allowed to testify by closed-circuit television if a judge determines that testifying in an open court would submit the child to "severe emotional or physical harm."

Many states have come out in support of the law; 28 of them went as far as to co-sign a brief in defense of the Maryland statute. Unfortunately, Oregon was not on the list. The excuse is insufficient time to study the document.

Opponents have argued the law's unconstitutionality, saying it violates defendant's rights. Supporters claim the statute only benefits court procedure, as children will give more accurate testimony in a less stressful atmosphere.

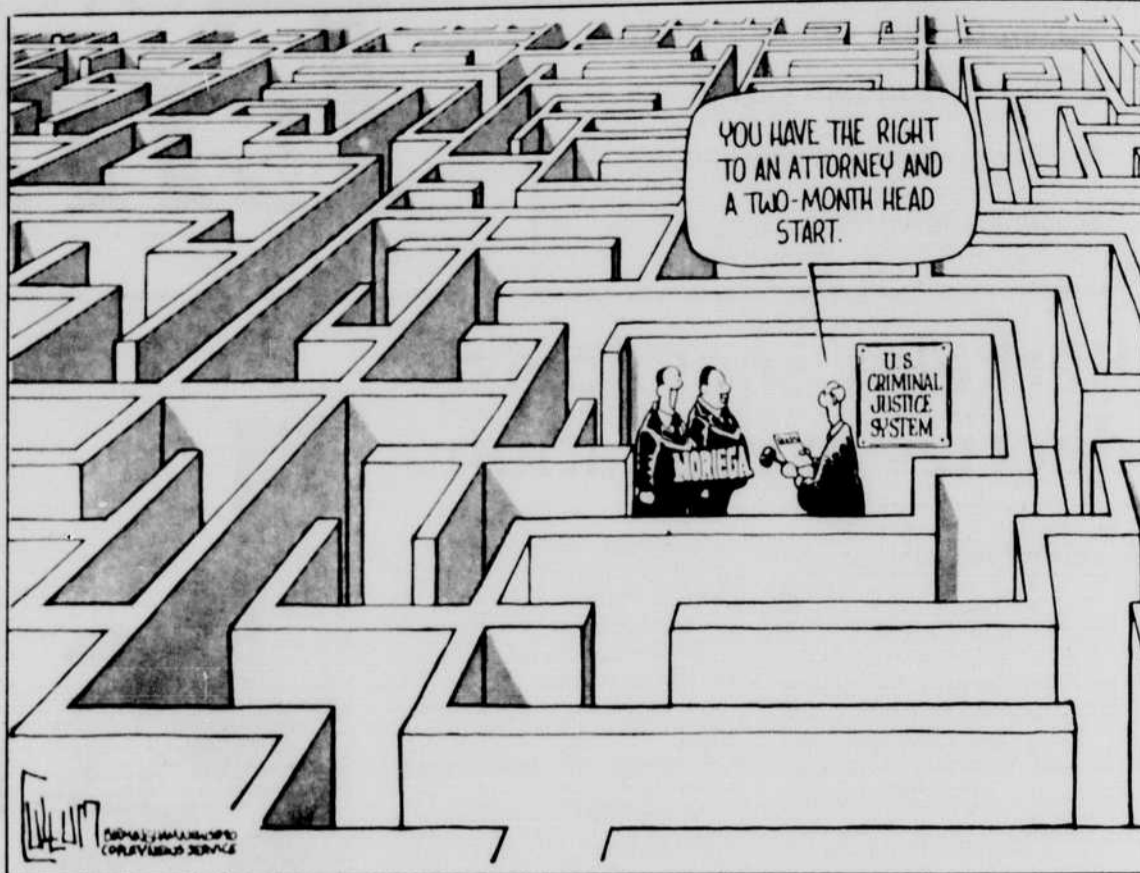
Whatever way the Supreme Court goes in the Maryland case will have definite ramifications for Oregon and the rest of the country. If the court shoots down the Maryland law, Oregon's will certainly follow.

There is no reason to subject a child to the pressures of a courtroom drama. Since most sexual abuse cases unfortunately end up as media debacles, the pressures on a child witness are incredible. There is no need to subject a child to that sort of stress.

This controversy can easily dissolve into a war of words, with both sides endlessly debating interpretations. Does watching a television monitor constitute "facing your accuser," or does the process violate the Sixth Amendment? It will be up to the Supreme Court to decide.

Put yourself in a child's place. Having to testify in a sexual abuse case would be traumatic enough, but being subjected to high-profile media exposure, and an open courtroom, would just make it worse.

The Supreme Court should take heed of the emotional context of the Maryland law, and allow it to stand. Oregon and many other states can only hope the nine Justices uphold the law. It's the only thing to do.



Summer session needs to be reviewed

With all the other increasing costs in higher education, you knew it had to come some time. This Tuesday, the Oregon State System of Higher Education held a public forum to air views on a proposed increase for summer college sessions.

OSSHE officials claim the increase is necessary to finance faculty salaries. Opponents, such as the Oregon Student Lobby, aren't buying it. Word from the higher ed administrators is that a decision will be made today, and if past precedent holds true, OSSHE will approve the tuition hike.

The proposed increase amounts to roughly 5 percent more than the 1989 session. It will cost \$503 to take nine hours of undergraduate work, as opposed to \$478 last year. For graduate students, nine hours will cost \$823; 4.2 percent more than in 1989.

Eight years ago, the summer session was separated from the rest of the OSSHE curriculum. It was set up as a self-supporting system, to operate outside of regular session budget concerns.

Since then, tuition rates have gone up, while statewide enrollment in the program has declined by 12 percent. Opponents say the latest tuition hike request is just one more example of how the system is not

working.

This space has stated more than once how screwed up the state's education system is. It's time to reiterate it. There is just too much of a gap between lawmakers and higher education officials. The legislature and OSSHE have different ideas on how much money should be spent on the state system.

While it would be unpopular to support a tuition increase for summer school, it doesn't come as any surprise. Lately, it seems the state government's idea of higher education finance seems to be keeping faculty salaries low, while increasing student tuition.

It's time for OSSHE to review the success — or failure — of the summer session. Right now, the system doesn't seem to be working. Before they decide to increase tuition, officials need to decide whether the system is worth saving.

The OSLS idea of having the state support the summer session as it does the rest of the academic terms sounds pretty good. Subsidizing the system would possibly increase student enrollment while streamlining costs. However, we've all seen how well the state has financed higher education in the past.

Letters

Band responds

As manager of the Bad Daddies, it is time to set the facts straight concerning the band. First of all, we have changed our name. From now on, we will be playing under a different name for each show while still keeping the word "Daddies."

Now let's get this straight. "Daddies" does not mean "fathers," it simply means "guys" — the allegations that our old name advocated incest is absolutely wrong. As a matter of fact, one of our songs, entitled "Drunk Daddy" is a strong statement against child abuse in no uncertain terms.

Our most vocal critics have never seen us, so they don't know this and have no idea what we are really all about. We are about music and having a good time, and not all the dark motives that have been projected upon us.

One of the band's major influences is Dixieland jazz, and

we took our name from a line in an old jazz song which went, "I want to be your cherry poppin' daddy man," which simply means, "I want to be your lover."

The posters for our show are still being ripped down by some moral vigilantes who are convinced that "Bad Daddies" is a reference to incest. We are ready to put this controversy behind us and hope our critics are willing to do the same. I would encourage anyone who wants to discuss this matter at greater length to write to us at P.O. Box 5192, Eugene, Or. 97405.

Rob Waldman
Manager
Bad Daddies

Resentful

Hey, Tim Hughes (ODE, Jan. 15), you of all people should understand the right to freedom of speech. Furthermore, as someone who does not consid-

er himself ignorant, I resent the implication of such a weak and obscure argument.

I simply feel your point sucks.

T. Van Schoiack
Student

Unnoticed

Perhaps Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday as an official government holiday is not such a bad idea. Without mail service, there won't be any letter bombs.

But then again, I seem to remember a prediction a while back about the year 2010. It is going to be the year in which the 365th official government holiday is declared.

I guess it's just as well. I imagine if the government quit running the country, no one would notice.

Audie Huber
Business

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