

School finance still unresolved

Oregon voters have spoken again, and the message they have sent to the legislature is one of unwillingness to fund primary education.

While some will dispute this claim, the numbers tell all. Oregonians voted overwhelmingly to change the way kindergarten through high school education is financed (Ballot Measure 5A), but wouldn't approve a way to do it (measures 5B-E).

Measure 5, all five parts of it, was not designed to become instantaneous law. Rather, it was an indicator of the current mentality of the average Oregon citizen toward education funding. It did that, even if the results are discouraging.

Put simply, Oregonians want a quality education system, but aren't willing to put up the bucks to pay for it.

While this is a criticism of the state in general, Lane County also deserves its share of the blame. County voters passed Measure 5A by a huge margin, but shot down both income tax reform and the institution of a sales tax.

Maybe an increase in the income tax, or a surcharge on goods is not the best, most progressive way to fund education. But so far, there has *not been one* other alternative advanced that makes the slightest bit of sense. Oregon needs a new source of revenue; needs to take school finance off of local property tax levies; needs to reform the entire system. These are not perks or increased government controls. These are critical to the state's health.

We all want social programs. After all, a government by definition, is supposed to help make our lives better. If it doesn't, we change the government. But the price of government social programs is financial support from the population. And Oregonians don't seem to want to make that sacrifice.

It's not just an anti-tax mentality; it is almost an anti-government mentality. Measure 3, which would have instituted annual legislative sessions, failed, albeit by about 6,000 votes. Opponents of the measure said it would turn lawmakers into "professional politicians," when in fact, they already are.

This is not a call to submit totally to whatever the people in Salem tell us to do. We have the right to get rid of any politician, if the majority feels he or she is unworthy of office. But don't be hypocritical and say lawmakers aren't doing anything to salvage the education system. They came up with ideas — four of them in fact. Oregonians didn't want any of them.

It is very easy and seductive to pass judgments on legislation while not coming up with viable alternatives. That is exactly what voters did on Tuesday.



Racism, anti-semitism reappearing

French President Francois Mitterand marched alongside 200,000 people Monday to protest vicious demonstrations of anti-Semitism that have occurred in France during the past week.

A Jewish cemetery near Marseille was ransacked and the body of an 81-year-old man was dug up and impaled on a parasol while holding a Star of David. In a suburb of Paris, 32 Jewish gravestones were defaced with red swastikas the day of the rally.

No one has been formally accused of any of these acts, but members of the ultra-right-wing National Front party, led by Jean-Marie Le Pen, are under suspicion.

Mitterand's presence in the demonstration marked the first time a French president has joined a public rally since World War II. He should be commended for his actions. Few French politicians have been willing to criticize Le Pen or take a stand against his National Front for fear of alienating voters — even in light of its blatant racist and anti-Semitic foundations.

The desecration of these Jewish graves is a revolting reminder that anti-Semitism is still a reality of modern times, and one that seems to be on the rise in the face of drastic socioeconomic changes in global politics.

And however repulsive and unforgivable

the events in France are, the French by no means hold a monopoly on racism.

Here at home, American universities are seeing a spread of white supremacist student unions, including one at Bradley University which sponsors its own TV talk show entitled "Race and Reason."

A white student union has existed at Temple University since 1988, and the universities of Florida, Nebraska-Lincoln and Southwestern Louisiana have launched similar groups this term.

Must we wait for something as gruesome as the defiling of a corpse to stir people to act out against the attitudes and institutions that allow people to carry out such a vulgar task?

Persecuting a group of people does little to restore order, economic health or stability to traditional institutions. But for some reason, it seems to be human nature to attempt just that — to lash out against Jews, blacks or gays and lesbians rather than to work for productive solutions to social problems.

More than a public demonstration — even with the presence of a president — is needed to prevent people from seeking a scapegoat to blame for instability in society.

But those 200,000 people who marched in France are headed in the right direction.

Ever brilliant

Eric Eckman (*ODE*, May 11), you may believe what you will, but when Ben Linder was murdered by a group of Contras April 28, 1987, near a rural hydroelectric plant which he was engineering in Nicaragua, it wasn't the oppression of the people that he had in mind.

Linder, if you had known him, was an amazingly generous person. He gave his life to help the poor in a country that lacked so many things, specifically skilled and educated workers. Linder, who had a government salary equivalent to \$13 a month, had a civil engineering degree from the University of Washington.

Eckman, Linder knew the risk of going to and working for a war-torn country. He wasn't naive. The risk he took was courageous, but it does not give the Contras or anyone else the

right to murder. According to your letter, it seems apparent you felt Linder deserved to die. He was full of love. Why do you want to take that away from him so badly?

Linder had a dream, that one day the people of Nicaragua will enjoy the standards of living we do, and be free of the tortuous path of war. Linder cared. He acted. He died. But his dream remains ever brilliant.

Greg English
Student

Politics of greed

Let's celebrate spring in Eugene with a good citizenship fair! And there is much to celebrate. Take, for example, our do-nothing President George Bush and his teen-aged Vice President Dan Quayle. Thus,

the "read-my-lips, no new taxes." Conservatism, the politics of greed.

And so the deficit will keep ballooning, but we here in Eugene are happy enough. Some sorority women were out in their yard dancing the other night, and the fraternity "men" were cruising by in their little imported hot rods. In my three years at the University, I've always wondered where these people are when important speakers or issues are presented on campus. The greek crowd is never there, never involved. Why?

The Republicans won't talk about taxes because the issue has worked so well for them and Ronald Reagan. Listen to Marlin Fitzwater pickle their power with Orwellian double-speak. And the Democrats, with all their petty concerns like the homelessness, and chronic poverty, and military

pork barrel boondoggles, and the S and L crisis (\$500 billion), the rape of the national forests, and a public hopelessly disillusioned and boycotting the polls in this model democracy.

No new taxes! Read my lips, which close around silver spoons. It's worked so well for us, and with the fall of communism, we won't have any issue to wrap party around. Flag burning? The abortion issue went the other way, actually. What's the GOP to do in 1990? The politics of greed might be

naked without no new taxes, the Gipper and anti-communism.

Tom Ribe
Graduate student

Message

"If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads." (Leviticus 20:13)

Jason Corso
Eugene

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