

Sen. Hill's leaving indicative of setup

The Eugene-Springfield area — particularly the University — lost a true friend last week when state Sen. Larry Hill, D-Springfield, left the Legislature for the private sector.

Hill isn't leaving public life altogether, as his new job is political director of the Oregon Public Employee's Union. Hill has been an outspoken advocate for worker's compensation legislation and has been a leading force in labor-related issues. So his new job is right in line with his political ideology and his interests.

But that doesn't lessen the blow of losing his influence and work in the Legislature.

Since he first went to Salem in 1983, Hill has been a credit to the area and has served his constituents admirably. He wasn't flamboyant or extravagant, like his legislative counterpart Sen. Grattan Kerans, D-Eugene. Hill was more soft-spoken, but that didn't take away from the impact of his personality and accomplishments.

During his time in the Senate, Hill was a member of the Joint Ways and Means Committee, which allocates funds to state agencies; a member of the Labor Committee; and served as chairman of the Water Policy Committee.

Hill's accomplishments are many, but ultimately he will be remembered for his work on the Fire-Med ambulance insurance program and his sponsoring and lobbying for the 1988 bill that upped the state's minimum wage level — before the U.S. Congress got around to doing it.

As the chief lobbyist for the 19,000-member OPEU, hopefully Hill will have a chance to continue his advocacy on the part of the blue-collar worker.

However, Hill's parting does point out a serious flaw in the state's legislative system.

The Oregon Legislature is still run in an archaic fashion. The writers of the state constitution wanted a "citizen's legislature" run under the principles of Jacksonian democracy; ordinary, everyday people serving their constituents for principle, not financial gain.

That is a noteworthy idea, but in this age, it doesn't work. Oregon lawmakers make \$989 per month and receive \$400 to \$550 a month for expenses when the Legislature is out of session. During the biennial session, they receive \$73 a day for expenses.

Legislators are not going to get rich off their public service, nor should they expect to, but it is ridiculous to expect excellence from lawmakers when they are paid less than poverty wages. It is a rare few that don't have to take another job to make ends meet, and that takes away time from what legislators should be concentrating on, which is state business.

Hill, who has a wife and child, had to make a difficult choice. The demands of the Legislature make it almost impossible to hold down an outside job, and puts entirely too much unneeded pressure on the individual lawmaker.

Unless lawmakers get a pay raise, this state will continue to suffer the losses of highly-qualified legislators, such as Hill, to the private sector. And that would be a true shame.

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Postage due

My name is Jeff. I am involved in a very special class project. I would appreciate receiving postcards from your wonderful city. By the end of the school year, our class hopes to have a wall filled with postcards from people across the United States.

Thank you for your assistance with this valuable project!

Jeff
Timbercreek Elementary School
Third grade
1900 Timbercreek Road
Flower Mound, TX 75023

Au contraire

If not for the occasional gratuitous inclusion of the F-word, Colleen Pohlrig's "Reporter's Notebook" on her beat with the Eugene police department (ODE, Oct. 21) would be far better suited for a 4-H club essay contest than a university newspaper.

Pohlrig's Pollyanna solution to the crisis in relations between police and students is for students to break the "vicious circle" by "exhibit[ing] a cooperative attitude toward the police." Well, excuse me, but the last time I checked, there was no professionally-trained group of students receiving large wads of my tax money to keep peace in the community; the police department bears that responsibility.

If the police are the ones causing disruptions — and I'm not buying the "tough job" justification — then it's not up to the students to fix the "negative attitudes."

Pohlrig began the article with mentions of a "weekend ... full of violent crimes" and a quote from an officer that "a large

number of students seem to be looking for a confrontation." The story itself, however, mentioned no specific act of violence; moreover, the majority of students the officer confronted were described as "pleasant" and "polite." Pohlrig accepts at face value the officers' assertions that this behavior is "very rare." This is sloppy reporting.

Even more sloppy is this sentence: "Our next mission led us to responding to a noise pollution call at the Sigma Chi fraternity." If reporters are not to be held to a readable standard of prose, the copy should be checked more carefully by proofers. A literate student body deserves this much.

Ron Jensen
Student

Toxics

We produce over 350 billion pounds of toxics each year; a 12,000-fold increase since 1940. Many of these chemical cause cancer, birth defects, male and female infertility, nervous system dysfunction, or other diseases.

The year, Congress is working toward the reauthorization of two major pieces of environmental legislation: the Clean Water Act and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. Both these pieces of legislation were intended to address the toxics problems, but have failed to be very effective.

Students involved with the OSPERG chapter on campus are working with 66 other campuses across the country to amend these bills. These amendments would prevent pollution by banning the most hazardous chemicals and reducing the use of all others, stop toxic releases into the environment, and expand citizens' rights to know about toxic

hazards. Generating the support to pass this legislation requires the active support of students across the country. I urge students to write their legislators asking for support on these pieces of legislation, and to get involved in the largest student environmental campaign ever to be launched. Contact OSPERG in Suite One of the EMU (346-4377) for more information.

Deborah Hallick
Campus coordinator
National Campaign Against
Toxics

R.I.P.

Why is it that revisionists cannot leave Christopher Columbus alone? The poor man has been dead for nearly 500 years. For God's sake, let him rest.

These do-gooders, like Howard Zinn, comment, as though surprised, that Columbus was out looking for gold alone. Of course he was, and who could reasonably blame him?

Were I undertaking a voyage into uncharted waters with my neck on the line because the king and queen expected me to turn a profit for them, I, too, would be rather zealous in my efforts to get some valuable

commodities. The same article on Zinn was titled "Columbus not just looking for New World," (ODE, Oct. 14) as though we ought to be surprised by such a suggestion.

Of course he wasn't looking for the New World. What he wanted to find was Cathay and gold.

Brendan R. Briggs
History

