

Western politicians endorse, denounce OCA's Measure 9



NORTHWEST

PORTLAND (AP) — A conservative congressman from California came to Oregon Saturday to lobby for the anti-gay rights initiative, Ballot Measure 9, while Washington state politicians were here to oppose the controversial proposal.

Rep. William E. Dannemeyer, R-Calif., appeared in Medford, Eugene and Portland, saying the nation was watching to see how Oregonians vote on the measure on Nov. 3.

"How we define the family unit is an important battleground in this cultural war," he said at an afternoon news conference in Portland. "That's the essence of the fight over Measure 9."

Washington Gov. Booth Gardner and most of the Seattle City Council condemned the measure in their own Portland news conference.

The Oregon Citizens Alliance, which invited Dannemeyer to Oregon, is sponsoring the initiative, which would require government agencies and school districts to discourage homosexuality.

It would amend the state Constitution to define homosexuality as abnormal and perverse.

Dannemeyer disputed gay rights advocates' claims that they seek only protection from discrimination.

"They want to solicit people to their lifestyle," he said. "That's their game plan."

Dannemeyer accused his opponents of "family bashing" and said the battle encompassed abortion rights, school prayer and secular humanism.

Opponents of Measure 9 from Wash-

'(Homosexuals) want to solicit people to their lifestyle. That's their game plan.'

— Rep. William E. Dannemeyer, R-Calif.

ington gathered Saturday to denounce the initiative. Gardner joined eight of the nine members of the Seattle City Council at the news conference in Portland.

Gardner, a Democrat, predicted that Oregon would lose substantial international trade if the measure passes.

"There are serious economic consequences to this passing," Gardner said. "I think it would have a very negative effect. The people with whom we trade are very sensitive to discrimination."

Gardner said overseas trade partners would watch carefully for the social and legal instability that opponents predict the measure would bring.

Seattle City Attorney Mark Sidran, a prosecutor for 15 years, said he sees the measure as a law and order issue that could spawn more hate crimes.

The wording, he said, does not make homosexuality illegal but gives it the appearance of a crime because it's placed alongside pedophilia, which is illegal. Placing homosexuality in this gray area, he said, could encourage hate crimes.

"Make no mistake," he said. "If this passes, a message of hate will unleash physical violence against gays and lesbians solely because of that status. It will be terrible."

Rawhide



Photo by Dylan Coulter

Brian Dramer, a University senior majoring in accounting, gets a flu vaccination from Student Health Center nurse Jeannie Burton. Health center employees are expecting the virus to strike earlier than normal this year, so they have already begun vaccinations.

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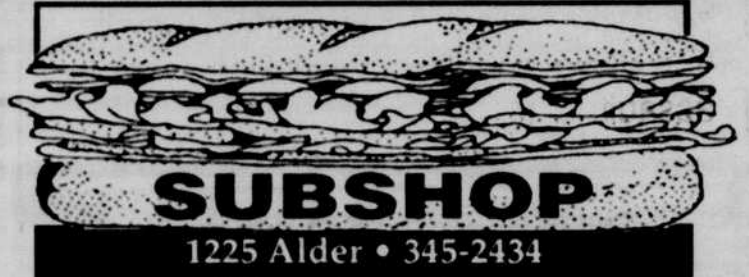
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