

## Voter approval not needed for tax plan

Tax. The word strikes fear in the human heart. It even scares politicians. Yet without taxes, the government cannot function, and the public could be left without essential services — schools, fire and police protection, roads, etc.

In a moment of mass insanity, Oregonians amended their state constitution to reduce the amount of taxes the state could collect, without also providing alternative sources of revenue.

State government took the passage of 1990's Ballot Measure 5 as a mandate for inaction. It has refused to submit a tax plan to the electorate. House Speaker Larry Campbell, R-Eugene, has refused to call a special session of the Legislature. Gridlock is alive and well in Oregon.

But it doesn't have to be. Article 5, Sec. 12 of the Oregon Constitution gives the governor the authority to "on extraordinary occasions convene the Legislative Assembly by proclamation." If a \$1.2 billion budget shortfall is not an "extraordinary occasion," what is?

Once convened, the Legislature is not required to submit a tax proposal to the voters. Article 1, Sec. 32 states, "No tax or duty shall be imposed without the consent of the people or the Legislative Assembly." The key word is "or." The consent of the people is not required.

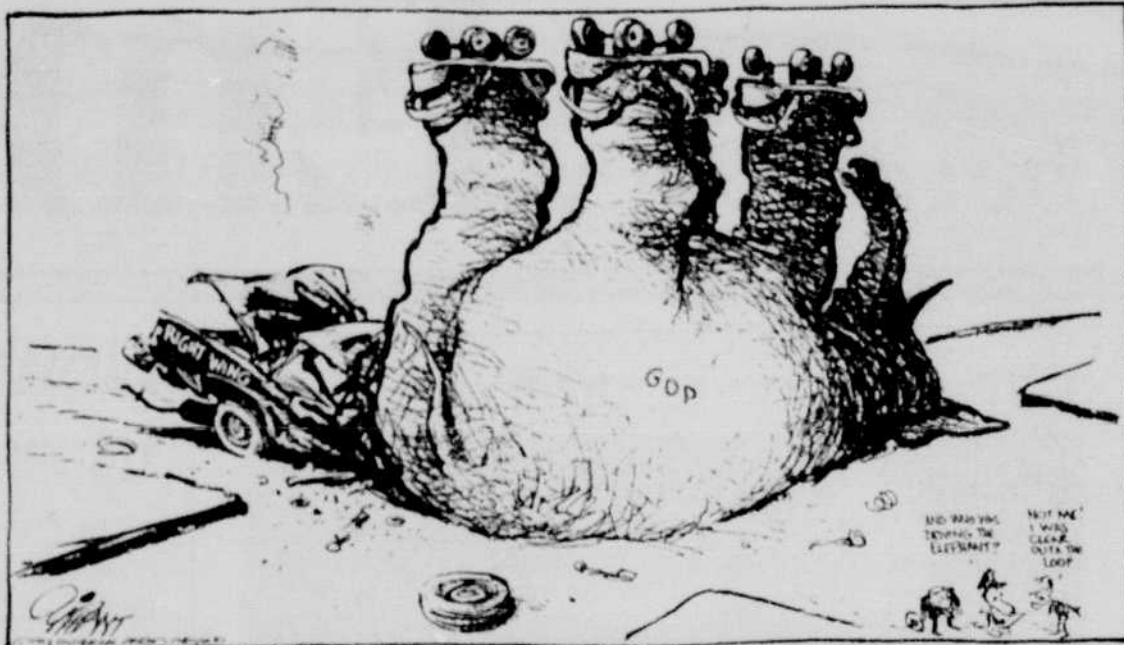
Of course, imposing a tax plan without voter consent would do little to increase the popularity of legislators with the public. But politicians are elected to run the state, not to make friends.

There are two ways to deal with the budget shortfall. One is to cut \$1.2 billion (17 percent) from state government and services. The other is to increase revenues. The state cannot survive a 17-percent budget cut, pure and simple. Replacement revenues will be found, and they will be in the form of new taxes.

Article 9, Sec. 2 and Sec. 6 require the state to raise revenue and levy taxes sufficient to operate. If the cuts can't be found, the revenue must, and will, be raised.

The people of Oregon have demonstrated time and again their lack of concern for the well-being of their state. It is time for the Legislature to get off its collective rear-end and take action. The primary task of legislators is to protect the interests of the state, not to react to imaginary mandates from an ill-informed electorate.

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## COMMENTARY

### Multiculturalism's clear message

By Kevin Washington

When I first read Ryan Blacketter's article in the *Emerald* (Nov. 10), my first response was to dismiss his concern as that of yet another individual who feels threatened by the recent blossoming of educational diversity that is sweeping across this country.

However, as I analyzed his commentary, I soon realized it was more than just fear that compelled him to criticize the revolution of multicultural enlightenment and ethnic pride.

In his commentary, Mr. Blacketter warns the reader that racial insensitivity is not unique to Euro-Americans. He says, "...multiculturalism exacerbates racial tension, and its advocates are often guilty of intolerance as well."

Then he went on to criticize black personalities such as Leonard Jeffries of New York City College, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, black rap artist Sister Souljah and poet Wanda Coleman.

Before continuing I would like to point out that most of Mr. Blacketter's criticisms were directed explicitly toward blacks. I am not certain if his intent was deliberate or just for the sake of argument.

Nevertheless, his condemnation is a bit misguided. He incorrectly assumes these people are proponents of a multicultural agenda, that the aim of multicultural enlightenment is to integrate the teachings of non-Euro-American culture with that of Euro-American, and finally, that the multicultural experience seeks to exclude, dismiss or berate the historical accomplishments accredited to whites.

Building an argument on these false premises only serves to deceive those who are unsuspecting and insults those who toil endlessly to eradicate such misconceptions.

With the exception of the Rev. Jackson, the persons indicted in Mr. Blacketter's article have never publicly endorsed or acknowledged a multicultural agenda. It is just as much a disservice to the true multiculturalist to associate with those persons who are not speaking on their behalf as it is to the individuals implicated.

Fearing Eurocentric convolution and domination, some

multicultural educators refrain from advocating an integration of the historical ideas and discoveries they subscribe to with those of the Western world.

In fact, most wish to emphasize and distinguish the qualities, histories and influences of various cultures. Nor do they shrink from espousing what they believe as a more accurate depiction of European and American histories — even if it is unsettling to some.

Nevertheless, they do have an obligation not to intentionally distort the records and show an unsubstantiated bias against any group. This would contradict the causes they champion.

But if evidence shows that Columbus did not discover the Americas — with its already existent indigenous population — only that he merely explored what was unknown to him and the rest of 15th century Europe, then let it be told.

This is not a rejection or condemnation of Euro-American history and culture. This is what scholastic enlightenment is all about. For hundreds of years Americans have been inundated with a narrowly defined account of world history at the expense and subjugation of countless other contributors.

Proponents of multicultural education should not be repudiated for bringing a fresh angle to the debate.

Though many cultures and races have enriched and enhanced this society, to merely exist in the United States every individual is required to be exposed to and accept Euro-American ideas and culture in place of their own, from language to eating habits.

If anyone is in doubt, reflect on the late author Alex Haley's historical account of the consequences suffered by his ancestral father when he refused to forsake his tribal name in exchange for the one forced onto him by his slave master. This reference exemplifies Mr.

**Blacks already understand — it is and has been a "white thing" for the last 400 years. They need not be reminded.**

Blacketter's warning about the perils of not accepting "Western culture."

Mr. Blacketter attempts to imply that white students who sport the "Love See No Color" T-shirts are more inclusive and tolerant of racial diversity than their black counterparts who sport the "It's a Black Thing" T-shirts. He even ponders the outcry that would result if white students donned shirts with a similar slogan in reference to their race.

Well, I'm sorry to disappoint him, but there is no need for white students at this University — or anywhere in this country — to advertise such slogans. Blacks already understand — it is, and has been, a "white thing" for the last 400 years. They need not be reminded.

Anyone who doesn't comprehend it should open his or her eyes and take a look around.

In regards to any culture, race or creed, one has to remember that each is unique and that each has contributed, as well as detracted, from the whole of civilization.

But as with a family, one must learn to love them for the mistakes that were made as well as those that weren't. I don't ask any person from any culture to be ashamed of their heritage — just to respect others' perception of it.

I implore Mr. Blacketter and those who share his sentiments to do the same.

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## Oregon Daily Emerald

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