

Tax reform proposals aim at relieving state budget

By Lisa Kneefel
Emerald Reporter

SALEM — Sen. Shirley Gold (D-Dist. 7) presented two tax reform proposals aimed at replacing revenue shortfalls from 1990's Ballot Measure 5 at the monthly meeting of the Joint Revenue and School Finance Committee Monday and Tuesday.

The proposals are an effort to find replacement revenue for the \$1.2 billion less the state will receive from taxes next year than it would have received prior to the passage of Measure 5.

Measure 5 modified property tax rates through gradual annual reductions. The state services budget is estimated at \$7

billion for the 1992-93 biennium, but taxes will only provide approximately \$6 billion.

Gold, interim vice chairwoman of the committee, presented a gross receipts tax proposal that would eliminate the shortfall. A composite tax reform proposal that includes a state sales tax and split-roll property tax rates was also presented, but it would only reduce the shortfall.

"Our objective was to get some action going," Gold said of the proposals. The proposals will be part of the Legislature's next session when solutions for revenue shortfalls will be researched, Gold said.

The gross receipts tax proposal would apply only to businesses whose gross in-

come receipts total more than \$300,000 per year. Businesses would pay according to a tax rate based on their receipts.

The other proposal attempts to balance taxation as well as replace revenue.

Gold said residential homeowners bear the brunt of the state's tax burden. The proposal would assuage the burden through a split-roll property tax. Owner-occupied property would be taxed at a rate of \$5 per \$1,000 of assessed value, and all other property would be taxed at \$10 per \$1,000 of value.

The balanced tax reform plan would include a 3.8 percent sales tax on goods that exempts essentials like groceries. The plan would allocate half the net revenue from the state lottery to education.

A critical feature of the proposal is an income tax cut for 98 percent of taxpayers, Gold said.

The income tax cut applies to combined family incomes of less than \$140,000 and single incomes of less than \$70,000, but rates would be increased for corporate taxpayers in the highest income brackets. The other parts of the proposal would account for the income tax reductions while still reducing the budget shortfall, Gold said.

Gold said the components of the reform plan can be adapted to shift more of the taxation from one source to another, or to eliminate a source altogether.

"You can juggle around these tax items as you see fit," Gold said.

SUICIDE

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number of things, and she had talked about killing herself" by jumping from a high place, Birr said.

Birr said conversations with other witnesses prior to Abrams' death also led police to believe it was a suicide. People would ask how Abrams was doing, Birr said, and she would respond with an answer like, "To be or not to be. That is the question."



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'Everything looks to be (suicide). There's no thought about foul play.'

— Lynn Walter
deputy medical examiner

ASUO President Bobby Lee said he learned a woman who had ridden the PLC elevator with Abrams Monday had a conversation with the deceased. Lee said he believed the extent of what Abrams said was "Today's the day" or "I'm going to make it or break it."

Lee said he had little idea about why Abrams was on campus.

"She was not a student," he said. "We don't know why she'd use PLC. The mystery behind this is pretty intense."

Though it has been determined a suicide, Birr said some specifics in the case still need to be cleared up.

"Not all of the loose ends are tied up," he said.

Gerry Moseley, the University's vice provost for academic support and student services, said he would urge any other witnesses or those who knew Abrams to contact police if they had information.

Counselors will be available at the University Counseling Center Thursday during drop-in group sessions from noon to 2 p.m. for those who wish to talk about the incident.

PLC

Continued from Page 1

cause of a lack of funds."

Kay Coots of the University Office of Public Safety said the minutes of the Campus Safety Advisory Committee show the fencing in of the balconies was discussed in a January 1990 meeting.

Morse said a Physical Plant employee was also hit by a full can of soda pop thrown from a PLC balcony around the same time, which played a part in prompting the recommendation. Only a short railing separates the balconies from open space.

"I think it's ridiculous," Morse said. "I think the building from the first floor up should be enclosed."

Morse said he also recalled other objects being thrown from the balconies, such as a couch.

"I think they ought to dig into it," said Paul Anderson, a carpenter with the Physical Plant. Anderson was also on the safety committee at the time. Anderson said the building's locks were re-keyed as a result of the committee's recommendation.

The section of PLC with the exterior balconies was completed in 1967, said University archivist Keith Richard.

University Architect Chris Ramey said the design of the stairs and balconies was probably chosen for two reasons. It was cheap to build, and the design was common when PLC was built, he said.

Reggie Augsburger, a Eugene fire marshal, said the balconies on the south side of the building serve no real safety purpose, and he doesn't know why the south side of PLC wasn't built like the north side, which does not have external balconies.

Augsburger said he did not think caging the balconies would be a violation of fire codes.

Monica Margaret Abrams, of 1872 Harris St., plunged to her death from the ninth-floor balcony Monday, Eugene police said. Leroy Merritt, a former dean of the University's School of

Librarianship, also killed himself in a fall from the same balcony in 1970.

Williams, the University vice president for administration, said the school did look at fencing in the balconies and putting screens on the building's windows several years ago because of the amount of things being thrown from the building.

John Crosiar, of the University News Bureau, said a proposal for an estimate and design was drawn up by the Physical Plant, but it never went in any formal direction.

Williams said nothing was done about the proposal because the University didn't believe it was a viable option to solve the problem of people throwing things out the building.

"We didn't want to cage people in the building to solve the garbage problem," Williams said. "Safety was not the issue at that time."

Coots said the safety committee looked for other ways to solve the problem and ended up re-keying the PLC locks. She said the committee re-keyed the locks because too many people were gaining access to the building and throwing things out of the building.

"We wanted to limit the access to the building after it was locked," Coots said. "The building had not been re-keyed in a long time."

Williams said Monday's incident is a tragedy, but it is important not to infer the decision to not cage the balconies on PLC years ago had anything to do with the suicide.

"There's no reason to believe we could have prevented what happened," he said. "If they have set their mind (to commit suicide), keeping that from happening is difficult."

ASUO President Bobby Lee agreed.

"There is not going to be a perfect solution. Anyone can climb up any building if they wanted to commit suicide," he said.

ASUO Safety Affairs Coordinator Caitilin Twain said there's another area to focus on.

"All of the community must make it known people can get support when they are in need," she said. "That will do more than putting up screens."

ET ALS

MEETINGS

Unwanted Sexual Behavior Task Force will meet today from 12:30 to 2 p.m. in EMU Cedar Rooms A and B. For more information, call 346-3210.

Korean Student Association will meet tonight from 6 to 7 in the Carson Gold Room. Everyone welcome. For more information, call 346-9595 or 346-8707.

OSPIRG's Environmental Education Group will meet tonight at 7:30 in EMU Cedar Rooms C and D. For more information, call 346-4377.

Students For Choice 20th Anniversary Roe vs. Wade Benefit Committee will meet tonight at 6 in EMU Century Room A. For

more information, call 346-0649.

Incidental Fee Committee will meet tonight at 6:30 in Room 155 Straub. For more information, call 346-3749.

Japanese Student Organization will meet today at 4:30 p.m. in EMU Cedar Room B.

MISCELLANEOUS

Dean of Students/Human Resources will present a video on confronting sexual harassment on campus today from 2 to 4 p.m. in Room 360 Oregon Hall. For more information, call 346-3210.

Women in Transition Coffee Hour will meet, interact and network with others on campus today from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. in the

EMU Women's Center Lobby, Suite 3. For more information, call 346-4099.

OSPIRG will show "The Fisher King" with Robin Williams tonight at 7 in Room 16 Pacific. For more information, call 346-4377.

Student Employment will present a summer employment workshop today from 4 to 5 p.m. in Room 12 Hendricks Hall. For more information, call 346-3214.

Pre-law Society will have a discussion on law school — how to get in, what to do when you get there and what to do when you get out — by Martha Spence, associate dean at Lewis and Clark Law School, today at 3:30 p.m. in Room 164 Oregon Hall. For more information, call 346-3211.

Museum of Natural History/Cultural Forum will show the film "When the Mountains Tremble" tonight at 7:30 in Room 106 Willamette. For more information, call 346-3024.

Outdoor Program will host "Overnight Backcountry Ski Touring" in preparation for the upcoming ski season tonight at 7 at the EMU Outdoor Program, Room 23. For more information, call 346-4365.

Outdoor Program will show "The Great White Hunter" as its Wednesday Noon Video today at 12:30 p.m. in the EMU Outdoor Program Room. For more information, call 346-4365.

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