

# Lobbyists back mammogram measures

By Sarah Sarzynski  
For the Oregon Daily Emerald

Women's groups are finding difficulty lobbying Senate Bill 905 and House Bill 2971 currently in the Oregon Legislature.

These bills would prohibit insurance companies from discriminating against women.

Specifically, HB 2971 would force insurance companies to cover the costs of mammography. SB 905 goes one step further by including necessary coverage of contraceptives and gynecological exams. It would also prohibit pregnancy from being considered a pre-existing condition for the purpose of insurance coverage.

Oregon remains one of the eight states that does not require insurance companies to cover mammograms as a part of health coverage. Presently in the Oregon Legislature, the House of Representatives has a Republican majority and the Senate has a Democratic majority.

Lolly Champion, president of the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation in Portland, cites the mammography issue pitting Democrats against Republicans as one of the reasons neither of the bills have been approved yet.

"Breast and cervical cancers, however, don't just strike Democratic women," she said.

Lee Smith, president of the Oregon Breast Cancer Coalition, said the biggest problem in lobbying for these bills has been "overcoming the resistance of the male members of the Legislature."

Insurance companies also are actively fighting against these bills mostly because they dislike the word "mandate," according to studies by Champion.

Champion said women themselves have lacked initiative in getting the breast cancer issue raised and enacted.

"Breast cancer is a social issue," she said. "It affects women personally, which makes the breast cancer issue different than the fight for other public care causes."

Currently, HB 2971 has passed the House and will probably pass through the Senate. The more comprehensive SB 905 has passed through the Senate but is being discussed in a commerce committee in the House headed by Republican Rep. Eldon Johnson.

Champion believes it will never leave this committee and never get the chance to move on to the House floor and be voted upon. She urges concerned citizens to call House Speaker Larry Campbell at 378-8977 and Johnson at 378-8869 and request a hearing and a work session for SB 905.

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fall term of 1994.

Higher education officials see this as a good move as the state battles the effects of 1990's Measure 5.

"We want to stop students from doing what I call major shopping," said Greg Parker, a spokesman for the state Board of Higher Education. "We just want to motivate students to finish their educations quicker. The board thinks some added motivation is necessary for students to focus on a major."

The motivation is financial. Resident undergraduate students at the University currently pay \$907 a quarter in tuition. But if the Credit Threshold Policy takes effect, a resident undergraduate student who exceeds the credit limit is declared a non-resident and would pay \$2,617 a quarter.

Under the current system, the state of Oregon subsidizes all in-state undergraduate students. For every tuition dollar an undergraduate pays, the state contributes two tax dollars.

But the higher education budget is facing cutbacks. The state's four universities and four regional colleges watched higher edu-

cation's share of the general fund drop from 15 percent to 10 percent.

The governor's proposed budget for 1993-95 earmarks \$646 million for higher education. This is \$85 million less than Oregon's state colleges and universities received under the 1991-93 budget.

These budget cuts will only get worse.

Measure 5 will cut another 20 percent from the 1995-97 higher education budget. The projected \$120 million cut to higher education in the 1995-97 biennium is expected to equal the state support allotted to the University in 1995-97.

For these reasons, higher education officials see the policy as a necessary.

"It's appropriate to establish limits support from the state coffers. We need limits as to how long the state will fund students," said Herb Chereck, the University registrar. "There are limitations on resources that students need to realize."

Chereck said 56 undergraduate students enrolled for fall term of 1992 at the University had more than 234 credits upon entering. These students would have been affected by the policy change.

Chereck also said the state, under the new

policy, would extend financial aid to students for five years. If a student decides to return for a sixth year as an undergraduate, he or she would pay the full cost of education.

The full cost of education means the student would no longer receive the state subsidy of \$1,710 per quarter and pay \$907 per quarter in tuition. Under the new policy, students found to exceed the credit limit would pay \$2,607 in tuition per quarter.

"The policy before the board recommends that in a time of limited resources it seems reasonable that students beyond a certain point in their educations should not be subsidized by the state," Chereck said.

But some students see the policy as a way to punish hard-working students.

"It's not fair that people are blaming students for the state's budgeting problems," said Raquel Karls, a University student. "The Board of Higher Education has no idea what students go through to get an education."

Karls said that the board, instead of forcing students to hurry in achieving their educations, should concentrate on spending money more wisely.

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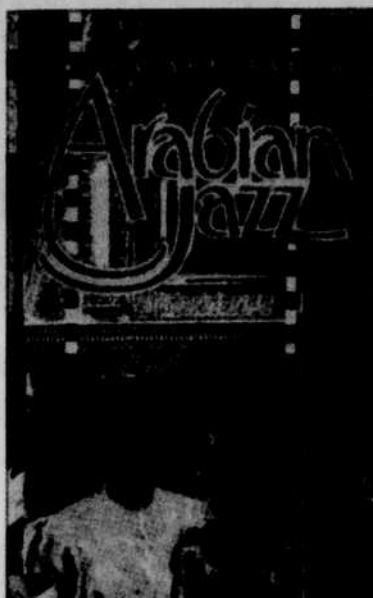
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