

The initiative petition: A vital yet annoying part of Oregon politics

Is there anyone left on this campus that isn't petitioning for something?

I know, the University is known for its political activism, and that in itself isn't a bad thing. But it seems that there are petition circulators on every street corner asking people to sign something or other.

Invariably I get hit-up to sign something only when I am running late to a class, or even more likely, an exam. Almost running down 13th Avenue, someone quickly approaches me with the all-too-familiar question: "Are you a registered Lane County voter?"

Well, yes I am, but I never admit it to the petitioner. I rarely have time to listen to the entire speech that the person has already read to me, and I won't sign anything unless I read it, and I rarely hang around that long.

Consequently, I almost never sign.

However, on occasion, the petitioner is a bit more obnoxious than I am prepared to deal with. Convinced that arguing with the person would take more time and effort than I am



ROBBIE REEVES

willing to spend, I'll throw out my standard excuses (lies) for not signing: I'm not 18, not registered in Oregon, not a citizen, or, the ultimate excuse, that I'm a convicted felon. (I'm really not, believe me.)

But that sometimes won't work. And so, if you are really daring, sign the petition, but not with your own name. This isn't something that I would specifically recommend; statewide initiative petitions are handled by the Oregon Elections Division, and lying is akin to perjury. I believe.

I have never done this, but if you are really bored, you can sign the names of all the presidents—sign as George Washington, then go around the block and sign as John Adams, and so on. If the circulator is that desperate for signatures then it isn't important who they come from.

Let me say here that not all petition circulators are bad. Not all are semi-crazed beings that have the time to stand outside all day in the pouring rain to interrupt people's lives to sign a petition. But unless a person has the time to listen to them, you'd never be able to tell the difference. And most people don't have the time.

Just the other day, I was approached by no less than 10 people asking me to sign some sort of petition on the environment. They were at the EMU, near the Knight Library, and who knows in how many other places. Have you signed the such-and-such petition, they would ask. I just kept on walking.

It's not that I'm politically apathetic. I always vote. I just don't like it when people try to sell me a petition when I'm doing something else that is more important to me.

If there is anyone out there that is circulating a petition, let me offer you a little advice. If I am interested in your petition, I'll find you. Set up a table somewhere, and park someone at it to answer questions. (Rule No. 1: Do not leave the chair.

Unless asked otherwise, sit down and shut up.) That way, voters that are interested will be able to answer questions, but also so that the entire petition process is a bit less confrontational.

It's not that I am in any way afraid or intimidated by petition circulators. It's just that the process seems to resemble the selling tactics of a used car salesperson.

Another thing to realize is that it is not necessary to blanket the entire campus with circulators in order to get signatures. If the initiative in question is important enough, the signatures will find the circulator. (Rule No. 2: Keep at least a 500-foot distance between circulators of the same petition. In fact, make it 5,000 feet. Walking into a human wall of petition circulators during one's lunch hour isn't the most enjoyable thing to deal with.)

If, however, it is not realistic to otherwise change the habits of petition circulators, let me offer this last bit of advice. If I don't look interested, don't bother me, especially if it is raining or if I look like I'm late to class. If I want to hear your argument, I'll ask. If I want to sign, I'll get out

It's not that I am in any way afraid or intimidated by petition circulators. It's just that the process seems to resemble the selling tactics of a used car salesperson.

a pen. But if I keep walking, assume I'm not interested.

The initiative petition is an important part of politics and society in Oregon. However, it is important that it be used in such a way that encourages participation by citizens, rather than alienating them by disgust in the system.

So if you want me to sign a petition, just remember my name: George Washington. And yes, I'd be more than happy to sign your petition.

Robbie Reeves is a columnist for the Emerald.

LETTERS

Drain you

It seems the word "ignorance" is being bandied about more and more in the expedient condemnation of those who might hold an opinion that differs from that of another. Nice, but it does not have that "Commie" ring to it... The Register-Guard quotes that came from my mouth and were intended to be quotes on my behalf. I feel it's important to mention this, as I

have too much respect for my staff at KWVA, and too little respect for my "generation" to speak on behalf of either.

Judging from the grumbles I hear surrounding what I said, it would seem there are a few people who tend to believe everything they read. Who's the ignorant one? I never called Kurt Cobain an idiot; I called him a *fucking* idiot. How could one be so absolutely certain of truth by virtue of print? Apparently, so

certain that a response with a blanket accusation of ignorance is warranted to pass judgment on an individual you know nothing about.

My quotes came from a very informed, personal and private perspective regarding two important elements of the story for which I was interviewed: Suicide and Kurt Cobain.

If I am weak because I survive each day with my own problems

compounded by the memory that people a hell of a lot closer to me than a high school friend were unable to survive their own problematic lives; so be it. If I am weak because I live with little respect or sympathy for those who make the decision to trivialize their life with self-inflicted death; again, so be it. I am weak.

A quick call to the Governor's office reveals that Oregon has yet to secede from the Union,

and the receptionist tells me that she's "pretty sure" our right to have and speak our own opinions is still protected, and luckily, so is our right to be intolerant of those whose views don't agree with our own. With that in mind, if you don't like my opinion, and don't care to know why I have such opinions, it is my opinion that you should kiss my ass.

James Pierson
General Manager, KWVA FM

THIS WEEK

main desk
EMU 346-4362

Weekly Special:
15% off Snapple

Available at EMU Main Desk Store:

- Greyhound Bus Tickets**
- Hult Center tickets**
- International I.D. & A.Y.H. Cards, Passport Photos**
- UPS Shipping**
- FILM DEVELOPING**
- Long Distance Calling Cards**

You can pay your utility bills at the Main Desk Store:
EWEB, US West, NWN

Tickets on sale at EMU Main Desk:

- Toasters 4/27
- Zero 3 shows: 4/28, 4/29, 4/30
- Kevin Kinney 5/6
- Peter Himmelman 5/24
- Petting Zoo 5/13
- Leon Russell 6/12
- Blasters 5/21
- Burning Spear/Zulu Spear 4/27
- TONIGHT 4/25**
- URGE OVERKILL**

APRIL 25-MAY 1

RAkU

workshop

5/15

sunday

11am-5pm

EMU CRAFT CENTER

UO • EMU LOWER LEVEL • 346-4361

YOUR PATRONAGE SUSTAINS US. USE OUR SERVICES. TELL US HOW TO PROVIDE SERVICES THAT MEET YOUR NEEDS. YOUR FEEDBACK IS VALUABLE.