

# Groups debate Measure 13

Jim Bottorff

For the Oregon Daily Emerald

The media coordinator for the Libertarian Party of Oregon spoke out against Measure 13 at a Eugene debate Saturday, calling the language in the anti-gay rights initiative "terribly vague."

Toni Nathan called for an end to "affirmative action for all minorities" and said that "it is the right of every free American to discriminate."

However, Kathy Phelps, regional director of the Oregon Citizens Alliance said she characterized the language of the 1992 Measure 9 as "too provocative."

"Measure 9 was written with the help of pastors who were used to writing in biblical terms," Phelps said, referring to a question of whether the previous Measure 9 equated homosexuality with "perverse" behavior.

The exchange between the two groups provided an unusual twist to the Measure 13 debate. The Libertarian Party promotes personal liberty and a limiting of government in people's lives, while the OCA sponsors the measure.

Nathan said she will vote no on Measure 13 because it doesn't go far enough. "We ought to go after all of these affirmative action laws which will result in quotas," Nathan said.

Ron Schlittler, spokesman for the No on 13 Committee, said "Toni Nathan believes that the issue is of libertarians property rights. Libertarians believe that private citizens should be allowed to decide who they can

hire or rent to.

"This idea of discrimination as a private right has been struck down in the courts over and over again since the 1920s," Schlittler said, citing gender rulings as legal precedent for government regulation of discrimination.

"Women are not a minority in numbers," he said, "but everyone recognizes the fact that they have been discriminated against."

As for the OCA, "they're not fooling anybody," Schlittler said. "What Measure 13 is about is codifying the right to discriminate."

Nathan qualified her statement on the right to discriminate.

"I believe that the very meaning of discrimination has changed over the years," she said. "In times past, a discriminating person was one who was selective. How can a person be selective if he can't discriminate against another group?"

"I feel that (1992's) Measure 9 and Measure 13 are a backlash against the kind of legislation that the federal government created with affirmative action," Nathan said. "Next they will turn short women into a minority."

"The Oregon Constitution states that the state shall not grant special privileges that shall not equally apply to all citizens," Nathan said. "Any affirmative action is in absolute defiance of the Oregon Constitution."

Nathan said she believes the solution to prejudice is for individuals to boycott businesses or

// *If homosexuals are granted special rights, then minority status will be destroyed for the poor black people.*

— Kathy Phelps  
Regional Director, OCA

clubs that refuse to admit minorities. "But for organizations to deliberately try to politically disqualify people on the basis of minority status is wrong," she said.

Much of the discussion revolved around Measure 13's impact on public schools.

"Government is using our money to teach that homosexuality is equivalent to race and gender," Phelps said. "If homosexuals are granted special rights, then minority status will be destroyed for the poor black people."

Phelps also commented on a question about books with homosexual content in the schools.

"We (the OCA) are opposed to homosexual propaganda written for children," she said. "We don't want our religious beliefs undermined by the schools."

Nathan said she believes that books should not be taken out of schools or libraries. "I believe that all knowledge is good," she said.

The Oregon Voter's Pamphlet, which was published last week, dedicates 19 pages to the discussion of Measure 13.



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