

Ballot Measure 13 is too restrictive

Although its wording is carefully calculated to sound as harmless as possible, Ballot Measure 13, the anti-gay rights initiative, will have a detrimental impact on education in this state — all the way from kindergarten to college.

The Oregon Citizens Alliance promotes the measure as "protection for our children." But Ballot Measure 13 extends well beyond children, and if it passes this November, the free exchange of information that every university should strive for could be severely impaired.

The key words in Ballot Measure 13 demanding attention are those that say, "... nor shall public funds be expended in a manner that has the purpose or effect of promoting or expressing approval of homosexuality."

Just what constitutes "promoting" or "expressing approval" of homosexuality is not at all clear. It doesn't matter what the OCA says it means. The OCA's intentions are legally meaningless. All that matters is the wording of the measure itself, and it's difficult to know at this point how the courts will interpret that wording.

On this campus, Ballot Measure 13 could mean that the University couldn't teach any class that would seem to have the effect of "expressing approval" of homosexuality. A class portraying homosexuals in a positive light — say, a survey of gay and lesbian literature — could easily qualify as "promoting" homosexuality and would therefore be banned under Ballot Measure 13.

The Lesbian, Gay & Bisexual Alliance could no longer receive any money from the ASUO to operate if Ballot Measure 13 passes, since student fees are regarded as public funds. And because the LGBA does indeed express approval of homosexuality — that's one of the organization's primary purposes — its right to even have an office on campus could be in jeopardy.

Counseling services offered by the University and other government agencies would be forbidden to discuss homosexuality in a positive way.

And libraries, including those on the University campus, would be forced to keep all materials referencing homosexuality in adults-only sections, out of reach from children — and, presumably, any young people who cannot produce proof of age. (One wonders whether the OCA will volunteer its members to serve as guards to these newly created adults-only sections.)

Since no public funds may be used to "promote" homosexuality, no new books describing gays, lesbians and bisexuals in a favorable way could be bought, even if libraries promised to keep them away from children.

And children's books on homosexuality, admittedly few in number, would not be available in any government-funded library, even for parents who might want to use them in teaching their own children.

The OCA would probably call many of these suggestions "scare tactics." Exactly. Ballot Measure 13 is scary. It would have an impact far greater than the OCA admits — perhaps even further than the OCA realizes. For the sake of education, Ballot Measure 13 must be defeated.

Strategy Gemstone of the Week



LETTERS

Revolution!

Our American system is falling apart! Kids are murdering kids for a pittance, a jacket or candy. What is America coming to?

The Republicans' hard-nosed response is "more prisons," but never mind looking for the real causes of our ills. It appears to me that things are getting so ugly and bad that America needs to be taken over by the United Nations or a foreign country with new ideas and solutions to teach us better ways. After all, we are trying to correct everyone else not living up to our standards! Would this not be a novel idea? It may put the fear of God into us to straighten up and live up to human standards.

I am sick of greed, cruelty and injustice in America. Will the upheaval come from outside or finally from within?

Hilde K. Cherry
Eugene

13 = 9

Ballot Measure 13, the current anti-homosexual measure, has been cleaned up of its vitriolic language but seeks to accomplish goals that are similar to its predecessor several years ago, Measure 9.

One of the results of the passage of this measure would be to not allow "public funds (to) be expended in a manner that has the purpose or effect of promoting or expressing approval of homosexuality."

The result? I quote from the ballot guide put together by Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon: "Measure 13 would censor academic freedom in an unprecedented way. University professors would not be allowed to assign any reading material that might express approval of homosexuality. Textbooks, works of art and the University programs would need to be reviewed and censored...Gay-positive support groups would be banned from campus..."

Leaders from various campus

ministry groups will be in the EMU Courtyard on Wednesday at noon to discuss why we are opposed to Ballot Measure 13. Join us!

John Reutter-Harrah
Campus Interfaith
Ministry

Inflated stats

This letter has nothing to do with political views, mine or yours, but with Paul Van Sickle's statistical knowledge (or lack thereof).

In your column (*ODE*, Oct. 20), you ask: "If 4.7 percent of homosexuality prevalence rates were taken from male prostitutes, and 20 to 25 percent of the sampling came from prison inmates, why is this a problem?"

I'll tell you why: Because male prostitutes do not make up 4.7 percent of the American population, and prison inmates do not make up 20 to 25 percent of the American population.

When survey research is done, the sample taken must be representative of the population to which the results will be generalized. If one wants to find out the percentage of prison inmates who are homosexual, one's sample should be a representative cross-section of prison inmates. If one wants to find out the percentage of Americans who are homosexual, one's sample should be a cross-section of the American population. A sample including 20 to 25 percent prison inmates is not a representative cross-section of Americans.

Since homosexuality rates are inflated in the prison population, overrepresenting prison inmates in the sample artificially inflates the rate of homosexuality obtained from the study. When the results of the study are generalized to the American population as a whole, the rate of homosexuality is overestimated.

Similarly, if one took a sample of people at the EMU to find out the percentage of Americans enrolled in college, the results would be worthless, since a

much higher percentage of people at the EMU are enrolled in college than Americans in general.

I agree completely with this statement from your column: "statistics are a dangerous tool." You are right. They can be dangerous when they are wielded by people who are statistically ignorant.

Derek Olsen
Psychology

Grow up

This letter is in response to Mark McTyre's column on the sports page of the Oct. 19 *ODE* slamming "Late Night with Jerry Green."

First of all, let me say that if you thought "Late Night" was boring, you are in the minority. Everyone I talked to thoroughly enjoyed it, as we did the last two years.

Could it be that people your age are bored with everything unless they have a beer in one hand and a remote control in the other?

If you think we can spend money like the "big boys," then you have been on the planet Mars too long. I don't know for sure, but I suspect that the sponsors paid for the "free" T-shirts that were given away, and I'm sorry you did not get there soon enough to get one.

I was in line at 5:15 p.m., and I guarantee you there were no "elderly people" waiting in line to get into McArthur Court. Get real! Attendance at this event has increased each year, and we are therefore grateful to Jerry Green for bringing fun and excitement back to The Pit. If enough students aren't showing up, maybe it's because people like you slam the event after it is over instead of promoting it before it begins.

I was hoping that the sports editor and writers this year would be more mature and enlightened than they were last year, but I guess it is not to be.

Terry Vance
Eugene

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