

End state gridlock; ban the legislature

The 18 ballot measures facing Oregon voters on Nov. 8 indicate widespread disillusionment with the state's leaders. The phenomena is a direct result of a weak governor and a legislature that refuses to do its job.

The censure of defrocked State Senator Peg Jolin for her felony convictions stemming from a shady campaign fund raising letter drew more attention and interest than did closing budget gaps created by the property tax limitation measure passed in 1990.

Insinuations that political action committees control the votes of individual lawmakers were, and are, rampant among the electorate. No wonder. In 1992, PACs accounted for nearly 70 percent of all contributions to legislators. It would seem, at least on the surface, that special interests dominate the state policy making body.

But the special interest conspiracy theory can only take partial blame for the ineffectiveness of the last two legislative sessions. Lawmakers appear to be ignoring proven voter priorities such as tax reform and secure funding for education at all levels. It seems that legislators are more concerned with individual agendas aimed at increasing personal prestige than fixing a government machine sorely in need of repair.

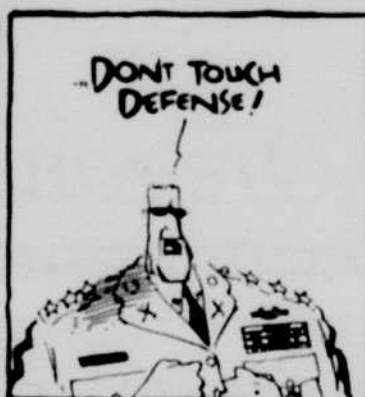
The result? Eighteen ballot measures seeking to run state government in place of a dysfunctional legislature seemingly co-dependent on PAC money. A few of those ballot measures (5, 10 and 20), if passed, would go so far as to amend the state constitution. When the voters of this state try three different ways to amend the constitution in order to conduct day to day public policy, they are sending a stinging message to the legislature.

The message is succinct and to the point: If the legislature refuses to do the job its paid to do, the voters will take control and conduct the duties of the legislature. If the ballot measures facing voters next week are any indication of how private citizens plan to run government in place of an unproductive policy-making body, then Oregon is in serious trouble. These measures reflect anxiety, fear and the power of special interests — all of which could have been assuaged with strong leadership through the legislative and executive branches of government.

Then again, when our esteemed statesmen actually agree to disagree and put a tax or crime package before voters, those voters whining about lack of leadership vote down attempts at progressive legislation.

Maybe the Oregon Legislature should be abolished. Such a proposal is no more ridiculous than any of the measures facing voters Nov. 8. Oregon could model itself after a small New England township where the municipal council is weak compared to the voice of the people.

If the 1995 Legislature performs in the same lackluster manner as its predecessors, voters should start collecting signatures to do away with an entity doing nothing but wasting resources.



LETTERS

Tainted justice

A group of concerned University of Oregon women collaborated on this letter to raise awareness of a national news story that isn't inspiring the front page media attention and public outrage it deserves.

Two weeks ago in Baltimore, a scary and outmoded legal precedent was strengthened: the use of the "heat of passion" defense to protect a husband who murders an adulterous wife. Judge Robert E. Cahill passed an 18-month prison sentence on Kenneth Peacock, a truck driver who shot his wife dead after finding her in bed with another man. Cahill explained away the light sentence with this brutal, backward and arrogant line of reasoning: "I seriously wonder how many men married five, four years would have the strength to walk away without inflicting some corporal punishment" (*The Register-Guard* 10/19/94).

The case grew more outrageous as Peacock's defense lawyer, David B. Irwin, attempted to defend the sentence with a string of irrelevant factoids: "He's got two brothers who are former police officers, and he shouldn't be in the penitentiary with people his brothers put away. I know from the family that this is not the first time he'd found her with a man. I don't know if she had a job. They both had alcohol problems" (*The New York Times*, 10/21/94).

Irwin also said that he has represented several battered women who killed their husbands, and that none of those women had served more than 18 months in prison—as if self-defense against life-threatening battery deserves the same punishment as the murderous tantrum of a jealous husband.

The day after Peacock was sentenced, another Baltimore judge passed a three-year sentence on a woman who pleaded guilty to voluntary manslaughter for killing her husband after enduring 11 years of abuse. This woman received a sentence three times longer than the prosecution had recommended, while the prosecution in Peacock's case argued for twice the sentence he received.

The irony of these two appalling sentences occurring within two days in the same city makes it tempting to conclude that some poison in the Baltimore water supply obliterates morals and judgment. Instead, we have to acknowledge the fact that U.S. citizens in 1994 still permit a justice system that routinely protects violent men and condemns women who suffer at their hands.

Marnie Thompson,
Office Coordinator
Women's Center
and 22 co-signers

Orwellianopia

This is in response to "Task force creates vision of card that does it all" (*ODE* Oct. 24).

The four-phase plan they dreamed up seems more like a nightmare out of George Orwell's 1984 than a benefit to the University. Nine of the ideas are about using it as a cash card. Hey, if I want a cash card, I'll get a Visa; the school doesn't need to provide me with one. Besides, would all the charges go on my Oregon account, and what type of service fee would be involved? Also, when I make a purchase, will my purchases be recorded then sold to direct marketing groups?

Secondly, they want to use it for classroom attendance. The University will know where I am all of the time, and the cost of installing a card reader into each classroom then networking them together would far outweigh the benefits of "encouraging" students to show up for mandatory attendance classes. Currently, sign-in sheets cost about five cents.

We are already paying for the travel expenses of Robert Huber in November to see if we will hire him to install all of this. Finally, even though the cards will have our photos on them, which would make them hard for someone to steal and use at area merchants, they still could be used to access student records at Student Access Kiosks. This idea will cost too much, benefit students little and remove the privacy of all.

Troy McFarland
Visual Design

Fishy leftovers

This time of year, it's commonplace for dorm residents to complain about the lack of selection and complete mediocrity of the food served in the dining centers (Carson and Hamilton).

Maybe it's just me, but so far I've found the same rotation of meals to be more frequent than in the past. Face it, how often can you take the same variations of chicken and fish (especially dressed up as leftovers)?

Well, don't laugh too hard. You and I are paying big money to eat this stuff, so we should be entitled to a decent selection and quality food. There is a suggestion box in the dining halls, but it doesn't do much good since nobody bothers to say anything. Then again, the dining centers probably wouldn't listen, either.

Bill Griffiths
English

Die safely

While I can understand that some people may be opposed to allowing Oregonians the right to choose to end their lives when they are terminal, both the editorial and the opinion pieces in the Oct. 21 *ODE* used fear-based arguments that misstated Measure 16.

Brian Womack claimed that his granny, who had Alzheimer's disease, "could be a prime candidate" for this measure. That is not the case. The measure applies only to adults who are capable, are dying, and have made an informed decision. He also refers numerous times to others, such as doctors, making the decision. This bill is about individual choice. No one else could make the decision.

The editorial claims that the measure makes no provision for oversight; this is blatantly untrue. Section 3.11 of the measure defines reporting requirements, including review of medical records and collection of other information, with an annual report to the public.

Measure 16 is well-drafted, contains numerous safeguards and requires consideration of all options, including hospice, comfort care and pain control.

Cheryl K. Smith
Eugene

Oregon Daily Emerald

P.O. BOX 3159 EUGENE, OREGON 97403

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published daily Monday through Friday during the school year and Tuesday and Thursday during the summer by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co., Inc., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon.

The Emerald operates independently of the University with offices at Suite 300 of the Erb Memorial Union and is a member of the Associated Press.

The Emerald is private property. The unlawful removal or use of papers is prosecutable by law.

Editor-in-Chief: Kaly Soto
Managing Editor: David Thorn
Editorial Editor: Joe Harwood
Graphics Editor: Jeff Paslay
Freelance Editor: Alaina Baum
In-Depth Editor: Ed Klopferstein
News Editor: Rebecca Merritt
Sports Editor: Chris Metz
Photo Editor: Michael Shindler
Supplements Editor: Trista Noel
Night Editor: Tiffany Smith

Associate Editors: Friedrich von Carp, Student Government/Activities; Marcelene Edwards, Community; Tiffany Smith, Higher Education/Administration

News Staff: Lori Bettineski, Wilson Chan, Amy Columbo, Tasha Eichenseher, Abe Estimada, Primo Fontana, Gayle Forman, Christopher Fox, Matt Garton, Gary Grass, Sarah Henderson, Kris Henry, Trevor Kearney, Adam Kincher, Mark McTyre, Ben Moebus, Anne Moser-Kornfeld, Sherry Rainey, Robbie Reeves, Lia Salocchia, Paul Van Sickle, Kim Weiss, Daniel West, Brian Womack

General Manager: Judy Riedl
Advertising Director: Mark Walter
Production Manager: Michele Ross

Advertising: Marco Ching, Tony Fox, Erin Hersher, Nicole Herzmark, Jeremy Mason, Michael Milette, Sarah Mitchell, Tom Mittelstaedt, Kelsey Weikel

Classified: Becky Merchant, Manager; Joli Setton, Jodi Wall

Distribution: John Long, Ferenc Rakoczi, Regina Zsupnik

Business: Kathy Carbone, Supervisor; Judy Connolly

Production: Dehila McCobb, Production Coordinator; Shawna Abele, Greg Desmond, Tara Gaultney, Brad Joss, Jennifer Roland, Matt Thangvijit, Clayton Yee

Newsroom: 346-5511 **Display Advertising:** 346-3712

Business Office: 346-5512 **Classified Advertising:** 346-4343