

# Measure 5: Bad for businesses

The public's confidence in their government — especially its legislative branches — is in the basement. Candidates of every stripe tout fiscally conservative campaign rhetoric. Politicians' fervor for budget cutting is surpassed only by the actions of voters, who have proposed tax-limitation initiatives in 23 states, including Oregon.

Oregon's Measure 5 would force the legislature to put most tax and fee increases to a direct vote of the people. Proponents of the initiative claim that it could cut in half the growth rate of government spending. Voters are fed up, they say, with the tax-and-spend, pork-barrel philosophy of their lawmakers.

As good as such an initiative may sound to financially tapped tax payers, Measure 5 is a bad idea. Proponents claim it will limit government and put money back in the pockets of Oregonians. Measure 5 could, however, limit the state's power of home rule, causing headaches for its already disgruntled tax- and fee-payers.

It surprises no one that groups receiving state monies oppose Measure 5. If passed, it will tighten belts for social, environmental and infrastructure programs across the state. The Oregon United Taxpayers Political Action Committee, who wrote the measure, meet this criticism head on, claiming that people desperately want to shrink government.

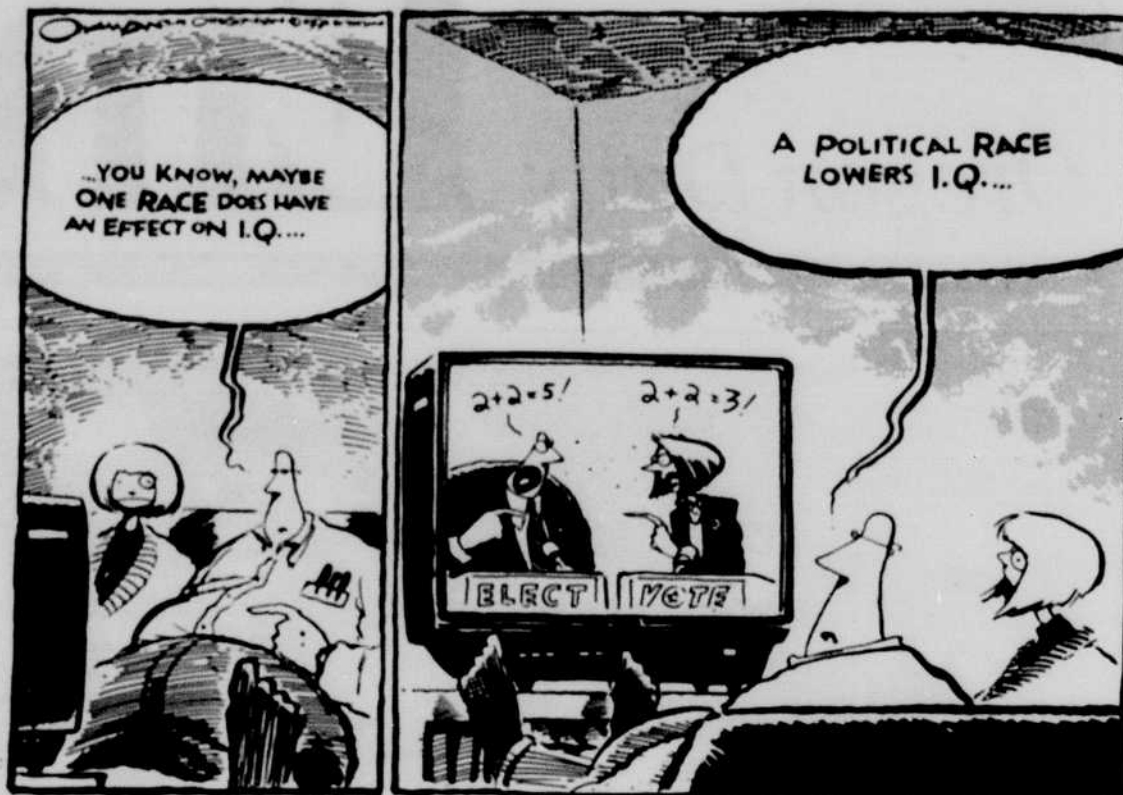
Less predictable, however, is the opposition of a myriad of businesses and industry organizations. These are, after all, the very institutions who are forced to pay the "user fees" that Measure 5 will limit. The fact that Measure 5 has united the public and private sectors is testament to the serious flaws in this well-intentioned initiative.

The bulk of user fees are paid by businesses as part of the environmental, health or other public-safety regulations imposed by state and federal agencies. Many of these mandates are of the "unfunded" variety — those that the federal government imposes, assuming the state will levy fees to pay for it.

In short, businesses are concerned that Measure 5 will prevent the state from raising enough money to meet federal mandates. If Oregon's voters allow such a scenario to become reality, the federal government may step in and assume the role of regulator.

Any bureaucracy is difficult and expensive to deal with, and only more so the larger and more remote it is. Businesses would prefer to deal with regulators who are near rather than ones who are far away. Taking duties out of the state's hands and forcing them on the federal government is bad for business and irresponsible legislation.

The regulation of business and industry is beneficial not only to those who pay the "user fees" that fund it, but to the population as a whole. The workers who trust that their workplace is safe, and the restaurant patrons who assume that the food they eat is healthy, will only be harmed if the responsibility for those assurances devolves on a preoccupied bureaucracy 3,000 miles away.



■ OPINION

## Wounds of racism run deep



ANNE MOSER-KORNFELD

Dialogue encouraging people to talk more about race relations needs to develop beyond the current stalemate.

Race sets people apart and determines whom interacts with whom. Skin color and skin tone that is any shade other than bright white, burning in sunlight, isn't right—or so the saying goes.

Race issues are a dividing force running through America. Race issues allow existing social structures to remain intact with little understanding of how such systems work or who receives the most benefits.

The University's student body is tipped in mostly one direction and provides an opportunity for one class and one group of people to succeed over those with less representation.

The University also presents an opportunity to discuss issues generally regarded as taboo. White people shouldn't fear confronting the "racist in the head" and should likewise be willing to talk about how that racism has affected white people.

Those ideals purporting to keep people down because they're poor and therefore too stupid become tired and meaningless, and those beliefs also hold down those who think they've made it on their own.

When climbing over the backs of people living on the wrong side of the tracks defines what moving up the ladder of success is, it's time to find another path for achieving success.

Racism, discrimination and disenfranchisement occur when those who take the most offense don't respond to what's said.

Disputes arising from race issues often come from people not being clearly heard. Those offended gloss over what they think they've heard and don't take the time to respond in a critical manner to the offending information.

Conversation starts with an invitation. Confrontation is not communication. Confrontation uses aggressive tactics to belittle and attack people making statements that often lack awareness. Diatribes against particular individuals do not invite conversation.

Finding common ground between people with varying viewpoints provides an entry point and sets a tone for conversation when views clash. The common ground is a meeting place establishing mutual acceptance of each person's worth, even in disagreement.

Sadly though, statements made by those who want equality and freedom for all are interpreted as a hidden agenda, or as views best left unsaid.

Consider the amount of courage it takes to participate in social groups that cross racial and economic lines. Public identification with gay and lesbian issues, ethnic and women's groups are ridiculed and dismissed. Violence occurs against people holding beliefs that are unsettling to racist doctrines in America. More often than not the violence goes unchecked, even in liberal Eugene.

Few people want to get into head-on fights about who they are and why they do what they do. People want tolerance and acceptance. People want the right to be who they are.

Problems arise when boundaries are broken.

Racism's boundary has been so broken it doesn't even look like a boundary in many people's eyes. The belief that it's all right to walk around, not look people in the eye, look to the ground and keep others from moving ahead to where they know they need to go is socially sanctioned.

Many people may not have a clue what is meant by physical oppression when two people of different cultural backgrounds meet and the dominant one attempts to send the other back to his or her place.

It's an eerie feeling.

It's an even eerier feeling that the mind set wanting to transform these habits works off of something so untried. In attitudes held by a vast majority, change will be painful for both sides.

The side getting squashed isn't going to be used to fresh air and the side squashing has to move back and make room.

Metaphor can be one way to develop a new dialogue. Race relations require visual understanding and an opening of one's heart and mind. The visual literacy enables those who claim not to understand to see things from the other side.

Different ethnic groups have their own pictures of how life should and should not be. Metaphor is a way to present those pictures, those snapshots. Metaphor provides the key to opening one's heart by seeing things differently, those issues outside of one's experience.

Addressing internalized assumptions and discriminations begins by recognizing what and how each unique person operates under the restraints of institutionalized racism.

Racism has become ingrained and the wounds run deep. Healing requires a willingness to shift from a person's comfortable stand to that which is awkward, unbalanced and probably wrong. It is the only way to achieve true change.

The time spent at the University is a time to make better citizens out of ourselves by setting down who and what each person has yet to become. Getting down on others because of some discriminatory practice tied to old ways starts a fire storm not easily extinguished.

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# 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.

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