

Assisted suicide debated

By Edward Klopfenstein
Oregon Daily Emerald

A recent radio ad against Ballot Measure 16, the physician-assisted suicide referendum, depicts a young man grateful his sick father didn't have a doctor to turn to when he wanted to end his illness with suicide.

The father is equally grateful for a longer life, according to the ad by Coalition for Compassionate Care, an anti-measure 16 organization.

But, Ballot Measure 16 isn't about length of life, said Dr. John Pridonoff, executive director for the Eugene-based Hemlock Society USA. "It's an issue of quality of life."

"High-tech medicine's dark side is that people can exist beyond life," Pridonoff said, who specialized in death and dying for 30 years in his California ministry. "I've dealt with the terminally ill and sudden death and found people interested in physician assisted dying."

Pridonoff doesn't believe that if voters passed the referendum that there would be an increase in suicide.

"Most will think about it and put it aside," Pridonoff said. "But at least it would be an option."

"If approved, Ballot Measure 16 would allow the terminally ill to ask their doctors to prescribe lethal drugs, enough for the patient to commit

suicide.

Backers say that safeguards like a second opinion, optional psychological exam and being diagnosed with only six months to live ensure that only the terminally ill get the drugs and not the suicide prone.

But, representatives for the Coalition for Compassionate Care say safeguards like that won't save people from abuse.

The Hemlock Society isn't politically involved in the ballot measure, but agrees abuses will occur if the law passes.

"Yes we're human beings and that's human nature," Pridonoff said. "But, we have to be watching for abuses."

Ten years ago, living wills, which allow people to decide before a tragedy whether they want to be kept artificially alive, had opponents saying that there would be abuses with that system as well, Pridonoff said.

But, "these abuses did not happen."

Hemlock staff have tracked the euthanasia issue since 1980, when the society was first started in Los Angeles by Derek Humphry after his first wife died painfully from bone cancer. The organization moved to Eugene in 1988.

None of the staff members wanted to give their last name because they fears their privacy would

Measure 16

WHAT IT SAYS

Shall law allow terminally ill adult patients voluntary informed choice to obtain physician's prescription for drugs to end life?

WHAT IT DOES

Adopts law. Allows terminally ill adult Oregon residents the voluntary informed choice to obtain a physician's prescription for drugs to end life. Removes criminal penalties for qualifying physician-assisted suicide. Applies when physicians predict patient's death within 6 months. Requires:

- 15-day waiting period;
 - 2 oral, 1 written request;
 - second physician's opinion;
 - counseling if either physician believes patient has mental disorder, or impaired judgement from depression.
- Person has choice whether to notify next of kin. Health care providers immune from civil, criminal liability for good faith

SOURCE: Oregon's Voters' Pamphlet

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be lost to people wanting to discuss the Ballot Measure 16 issue.

"It's not your usual job where you're talking about death all the time," said Robyn, the office manager.

Measure funds Ferry Street Bridge expansion

BRIDGING THE GAP

Proposed Ferry Street Bridge project

- Proposed improvements to Ferry Street Bridge include six auto lanes, two fixed rail lanes, two pedestrian lanes and a new pedestrian bridge.
- The estimated cost is \$73 million.
- \$24 million in federal, \$14 million in state and \$3 million in Lane County transportation funds are allocated for the project.
- Realign the connections to Franklin Boulevard, Patterson Street and Hilyard Street at the south end of the bridge.
- Revamp the bridge approaches to I-105 and redesign the connections to Third and Fourth avenues and limit access to Fairway Loop.
- Build a new, two-lane roadway to connect Centennial Boulevard with Coburg Road at Oakmont.
- Bridge construction is expected to get under way no earlier than 1997 or 1998.
- The project elements would be constructed in phases over a period of five to ten years or longer.
- At least four lanes of traffic in the corridor will be open most of the time during construction.

SOURCE: City of Eugene

Marcelene Edwards

Oregon Daily Emerald

The Ferry Street Bridge could get a major facelift if Measure 20-23 passes.

The measure allows the city to proceed with plans to replace the existing four-lane bridge with a new six-lane bridge and make other improvements to areas around the bridge.

The projected cost of the project is \$73 million, which includes design and engineering, right-of-way acquisition and construction, according to a city fact sheet. The No on 20-23 campaign claims that the cost is in 1994 dollars and the actual amount could be closer to \$100 million.

"There is no way to fund that unless you believe their promises to get it from the state government," said Neale Hyatt, chairman of 20-23.

The supporters of the measure say that \$24 million will come from the federal government. However, Hyatt said the Federal Congressional Act says that government will pay for 80 percent of the cost and that funding can be used only for the bridge itself. It cannot be transferred to other parts of the corridor.

The bridge structure will cost \$10 million. This means the federal government will contribute \$8 million to the total cost of the project, down for the \$24 million promised.

"These folks play very loose with the truth," said Jeff Miller, co-chairman of Citizen's Planning for Our Future and former Eugene mayor.

This is not a money issue. It is impossible to have all the money in hand before you start the bridge, he said.

The charter amendment only authorizes the project. According to the city charter, voters must approve all projects for major road construction or for the removal of historic trees.

The construction will not begin any earlier than 1997 or 1998.

The construction will progress in stages that could continue for five years or more, said Phil Weiler, public information analyst for the city of Eugene. The project would only go as fast as funds would allow it. Weiler said the additional money not available now will become available over the course of the project. It is unlikely that funds would not become available, Weiler said.

The plan submitted to the voters includes six lanes of auto traffic; two lanes for fixed rail, two lanes of two-way traffic, two lanes for pedestrian traffic; a new bicycle/pedestrian bridge separate from the new bridge, but immediately adjacent to it and a new highway from Oakmont Way to run behind the Albertson's store and under Interstate-105 to connect with Centennial Boulevard.

According to the No on 20-03 campaign the city has not sufficiently studied the ways in which the proposed expansion will affect traffic in other corridors throughout the city.

But Miller said the committee that designed the plan looked at 30 proposals and has done large amounts of research to make sure that the proposal in the measure is the best one.

Additional funding includes \$14 million from the state and \$3 million from Lane County.

Eugene voters asked to fund \$26.1 million public library

Rebecca Merritt

Oregon Daily Emerald

Eugene voters will decide Tuesday whether they want to fund a new library in the old Sears building with \$26.1 million in city bonds.

The measure comes four years after voters approved the purchase of the Sears site, located at West 10th Avenue and Charnelton Street, for a new library. Last May, voters narrowly rejected a \$56.2 million bond that would have funded the library, opened Bailey Hill Fire Station and paid for city building maintenance costs.

Library supporters said the spring measure failed because voters didn't like clumping the library with other city expenses.

"There were too many different things in the measure," said Emily Schue, co-chairwoman of the Library Yes committee. "This time it's by itself. If we don't make it this time we're cooked."

Schue said library backers are cautiously optimistic about the measure. The Sears building would be a 100,000 square-foot library, while the current building is 37,000 square feet. The library is circulating five times as many books than when it opened in 1959, and city officials

have discussed the possibility of a new library since 1984.

Although some of the measure's opponents agree that Eugene needs a larger library, they don't think the Sears building is the best site, said Arthur Shapiro, co-chair of the No Unfair Tax Scheme committee.

"The Sears building is a white elephant of magnificent proportions," Shapiro said.

Shapiro said it would make more sense for the city to tear down the 50-year-old building. The city should expand its current site to accommodate the growing number of library users.

Shapiro said he is opposed to the library because he hasn't seen any design plans for the Sears building. He also is against the method used to fund the library.

The library bond will be repaid with property taxes over a 20-year period, with interest estimated at 7.5 percent annually.

Out of the 19.7 million of the bond that will go toward the construction and equipping of the library, \$3 million is dedicated for inflation and adjustment, Shapiro said.

"Over 15 percent of the total construction

bond buys nothing and could conceivably be considered as a slush fund," he said.

About \$7 million of the \$26.1 million bond will pay for new library materials, computer equipment and automated library book check-out machines. Shapiro said he's worried that voters will face another expensive bond in ten years when the money runs out for materials.

Opponents also are concerned about parking at the new library if the measure passes. Schue said users of the new library will use a lot across the street from the Sears building. The first hour of parking will be free but library patrons will have to pay 75 cents an hour after that. Shapiro said the lot is unsafe for children because they have to cross a busy street to get to the library.

"Locating the parking across the street is going to encourage jaywalking," he said.

If the measure passes, Schue said the new library won't open until 1997. That would make the wait for the library nearly 15 years for some library backers. However, supporters aren't frustrated.

"I think these things are apt to take a long time," Schue said. "It took longer than this to build the Hult Center."

Measure 20

WHAT IT SAYS

Shall state constitutional tax provisions be repealed, "equal tax" on transfers of property, goods, services, replace current state and local taxes?

WHAT IT DOES

Ballot measure 20 amends state constitution. Repeals sections regarding income tax, fuel and oil taxes, urban renewal financing, tax bases, property taxes, tax limitations, related matters. Substitutes "equal tax" on all transfers of property, goods, services. Including loans, securities, insurance, barter and gifts over \$1,000. Exempts charitable gifts, pensions. Prescribes who pays taxes. State rate 2 percent, local 1 percent or less. Sets priorities to allocate revenue. Ends constitutional state, district bonding authority. Effective Jan. 1, 1995.

Measure 8

WHAT IT SAYS

Shall the Oregon Constitution require public employees to pay 6 percent of their salaries toward their pensions and bar pension increases from unused sick leave?

WHAT IT DOES

Ballot Measure 8 imposes certain requirements and prohibitions on public employee pay and benefits. First, it requires all public employees covered by retirement plans to pay 6 percent of their salaries or gross wages to the plans. Second, it prohibits government employers from making any payment to the plan that would relieve employees of the 6 percent obligated contribution. The prohibition applies to contracts and agreements made on or after Jan. 1, 1995, regardless of an employee's date of employment. Third, it prohibits government employers from increasing employee salary, benefits or other compensations for the 6 percent contribution. Fourth, it prohibits government employers from guaranteeing any rate of interest or return on pension funds. Fifth, it prohibits unused sick leave from increasing retirement benefits of employees who retire on or after Jan. 1, 1995.