

Professors question enactment of Measure 8

Contribution: Employees raise their eyebrows at the latest order to give up a portion of their earnings to retirement funds

Marcelene Edwards
Oregon Daily Emerald

University professors all over campus have expressed doubts about the fairness of Measure 8, the recently passed ballot measure that requires public employees to contribute 6 percent of their salaries to their pensions.

"It stinks," Associate Professor of Physics Raymond Frey said.

It makes music theory Professor Robert Hurwitz want to scream. Others share similar feelings as the implementation of the measure becomes a reality in their lives.

Three legal challenges have been filed to block Measure 8.

One of the main debates surrounding the measure has been the possibility of constitutional violations.

"I think there are serious constitutional questions

involved with the measure," Hurwitz said. But, he said, the legal challenges filed should be allowed to run their courses quietly.

"It is more likely to be successful if we are allowed due process," Hurwitz said.

Others argue the measure was not appropriate for as ballot measure from the start.

"There are some very odd things about it. Unfortunately, it was couched as a constitutional amendment," said A. Dana Johnston, professor of geological science.

A 6 percent contribution by government to public employee pensions, which has now been eliminated by Measure 8, was first implemented in the 1970s when state employees had a pay freeze. Most state employees viewed it as part of their salary or at least part of their benefit package.

With the state contribution taken away, employees are required to contribute 6 percent from their own salary. It is essentially a 12 percent reduction in the salary package, Johnston said.

Members of the Faculty Senate will meet Wednesday,

Jan. 11, to discuss whether to endorse a request to the state Board of Higher Education to offset the effects of Measure 8.

On Dec. 16, 1994, the Inter institutional Faculty Senate met with the board to discuss the effects of Measure 8 on the faculty.

Anthony Wilcox, a professor at Oregon State University, spoke at the meeting saying that "Measure 8 is the proverbial straw that breaks the faculty's back." He called for a raise in salary for university professors citing the Oct. 19, 1994 issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, which reported that Oregon had the largest reduction in faculty salaries of all the states in the last two years. He also said that Oregon faculty is paid "approximately 20 percent less than faculty at comparable institutions in other states."

Johnston echoed that sentiment, saying that when he reviews grant proposals from other universities he always notices that other professors are earning more than the ones in Oregon.

"There is no doubt we are way behind," he said.



GARY GRASS/Emerald

University of Oregon freshman Travis Ferguson lost control of his car during his morning commute to astronomy class Thursday.

Brief cold spell brings snow, ice to Eugene

Weather: Changes in temperatures create unexpected conditions Thursday which may lead to some travel problems this weekend

Ben Moebius
Oregon Daily Emerald

Snowmen and snowball fights were not quite possible, but the ground was covered Thursday with a light layer of late Christmas cheer.

Temperatures dipped below freezing during the night bringing some ice and snow to Eugene. The brief freeze caused a few accidents on Lane County's roads, according to State Police Captain Rusty Wolfe.

"Most of the accidents were minor fender-benders," Wolfe said, "but we did get about six to eight calls before 10 a.m."

Wolfe predicted that the police department would be responding to at least as many calls today with temperatures expected to drop below freezing again overnight.

"It could even turn out to be worse," Wolfe said. "With the melted snowfall from the day before, there might be more ice."



GARY GRASS/Emerald

The I-5 bridges can be dangerous when temperatures fall below freezing.

Employees contest pension measure

Argue: Courts will now determine the constitutionality of Measure 8

Tiffany Smith
Oregon Daily Emerald

A legal challenge was filed Thursday in the Lane County Circuit Court that seeks to have Measure 8, which requires public employees to contribute 6 percent of their salaries to their pensions, declared unconstitutional.

Among the plaintiffs are two former Oregon governors and a former chief justice of the Oregon Supreme Court.

According to University President Dave Frohnmyer, the constitutionality of the measure comes down to three pure questions of law.

Because Measure 8 was crafted under the initiative process and not through the legislature, Frohnmyer said it violates the Guarantee Clause of the U.S. Constitution, which provides for a republican form of government.

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GOOD MORNING

► WASHINGTON (AP) — Actress Marilyn Monroe will grace a U.S. postage stamp this year, with the design being officially unveiled today at Planet Hollywood in New York.

The 32-cent Monroe stamp will be the first in a series honoring legends of Hollywood, postal officials said.

The stamp carries a reproduction of Monroe's signature and artwork based on a movie star image that post office publicity describes as epitomizing "the explosive combination of talent and vulnerable beauty that continues to enrapture America and the world."