

## Notification bill bad public policy

Abortion foes won a victory in the Legislature last week when the Oregon Senate passed a measure that would require physicians to notify a minor's parents 48 hours before performing an abortion for her.

Senate Bill 1126, the parent-notification bill, now heads to the House for consideration.

The bill disregards two simple facts: Laws and legislators cannot force children to talk with their parents, and teenage girls do not become pregnant by themselves.

Parent notification is flawed and it will not work.

Parents and their children must have a loving relationship before healthy communication can take place. If 90 legislators think they can mandate parents and children to talk to one another, they are naive and wrong.

Dead wrong.

Young women with unwanted pregnancies will still find ways to have abortions without parental notification. It may mean going to a state with less-restrictive laws, finding a "back-alley" abortion, or trying to conduct an abortion themselves, but they will find a way.

Some argue that pre-abortion parent notification is consistent with laws requiring parental consent for medical procedures given to children. Some schools aren't allowed to give out aspirin to students without permission from Mom or Dad.

However, abortion is different. Because of the social and moral upheaval surrounding the procedure, it cannot be lumped with Tylenol and tonsillectomies.

Parent notification would force a pregnant teen into a potentially volatile situation. She might not have a great relationship with her parents, but that won't matter.

Unless the young woman is in danger of abuse or if one of her parents is drug-addicted or mentally ill, the bill requires her to tell them.

In addition, the bill does not require a young man to inform his parents that his girlfriend is terminating their pregnancy. As is too often the case, the responsibility and stigma fall only on her shoulders.

If reducing abortions is an honest objective, why are men left out of the equation?

The goals of the bill are to reduce abortions and to help [female] minors get support during a critical point in their lives, said bill proponent Sen. Stan Bunn, R-Newberg.

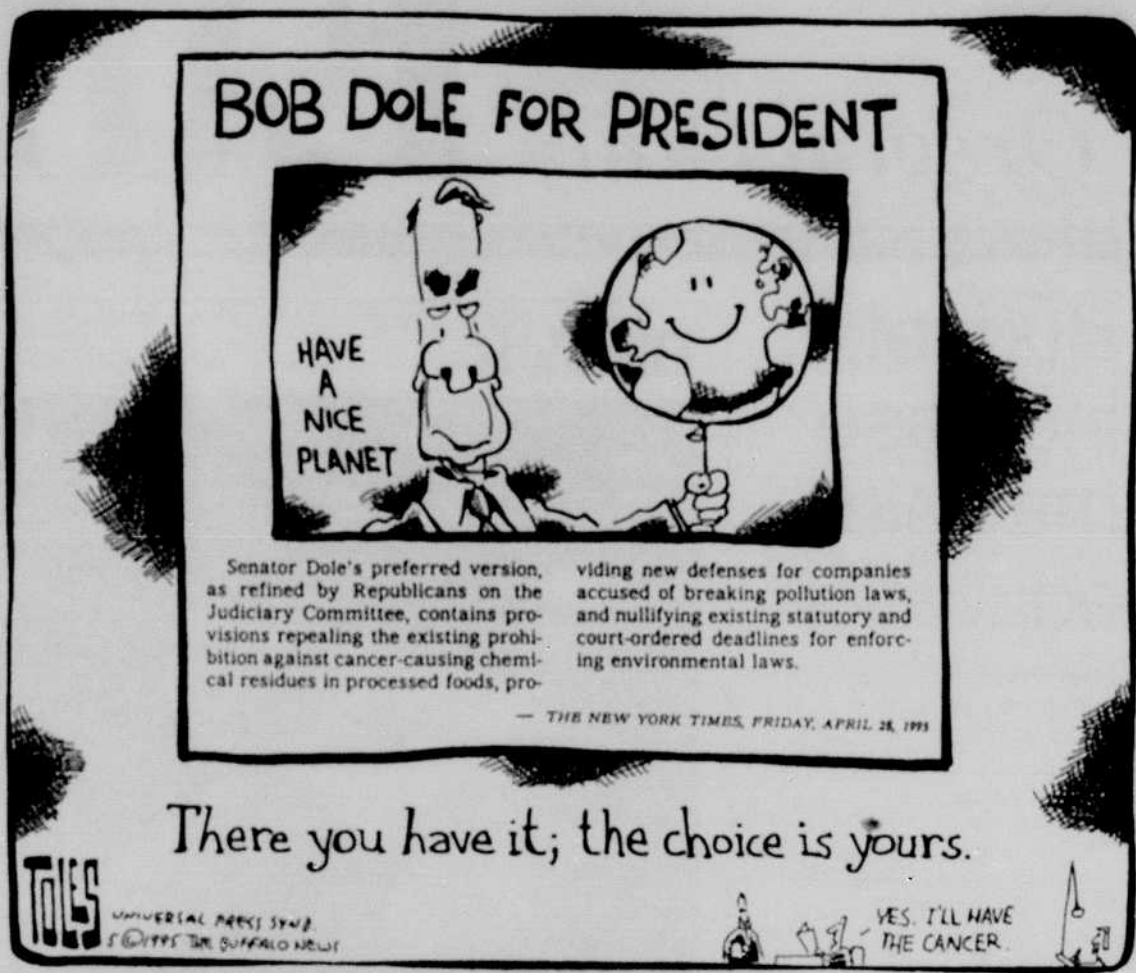
Unfortunately, neither goal will be accomplished by SB 1126.

In a perfect world, minors wouldn't get pregnant, and teen abortions would be a non-issue. However, ours is a less-than-ideal world, and children do get pregnant.

Minors must be allowed to make informed choices about what happens with their bodies. They shouldn't be required to tell anyone.

Parent notification is a bad idea that will hurt young women and reduce their reproductive options.

More important, SB 1126 shows us that as "enlightened" as we have become about women's equality, a male-dominated government can still chain the next generation of American women to the virgin-whore labels of their foremothers. Once again, young men receive the message: you are not responsible for your penis.



There you have it; the choice is yours.

### OPINION

## Conservatism has different meanings



BRIAN WOMACK

On a campus that has been called the Berkeley of the Northwest, it's no wonder that the definition of conservatism has been skewed.

This is a campus where the leading candidates argue over who is more of a feminist. This is a campus where a magazine by the name of the *Oregon Commentator* can be called conservative.

I can understand the confusion. On this kind of campus, anyone or anything that isn't liberal or leftist is considered conservative. I often see people that just about anywhere else would be considered centrist or moderate, but here they are thought to be on the right.

But just because you're right of left doesn't mean you're a conservative. Here, it usually means you're actually a libertarian. Yet libertarianism has a much tighter definition of what government's role is than conservatism.

Let's draw some of those distinctions. I proudly classify myself as a conservative. This classification carries over even when I'm off-campus or off-Eugene for that matter.

As a conservative, I believe the government needs to get off the backs of Americans — be they property owners, business owners or parents. Just like a majority of voters in November, I believe government has grown way beyond where it needs to be.

On these kinds of issues, the *Commentator*, libertarians and I probably see eye to eye.

But, as many know, I don't believe people should be

allowed to do anything and everything their passions might take them.

That's why I'll gladly stand up in favor of a constitutional amendment against child pornography or help limit the prevalence of the horrors of abortion. That's why I'll gladly stand up against ballot measures that allow doctors to assist in their patient's suicide.

Libertarians, especially on the issue of life, usually don't agree with these tenets. They're social liberals.

Conservatives believe in a certain balance between making sure government doesn't do too much to intrude, and realizing that government has a place in keeping a sort of normalcy and values in place to help retain order in society.

However, libertarians don't subscribe to this balance to the degree conservatives do. Whether it be legalizing pot or putting the brakes on restoring values to culture, the approach of "freedom in everything" draws a distinct line between the two ideologies.

As we see in the *Commentator*, ideas of free-thought and free-market are given free reign. But the ideals of social conservatism are not given much of a voice.

As further evidence of libertarianism at the *Commentator*, Ed Carson, the former news editor of the publication, now works for a national libertarian magazine.

Yet, the *Commentator* continues to say in its mission statement, "Our main purpose is to show students that a political philosophy of conservatism... is an intelligent way of looking at the world."

I'm not saying this to whine because my point of view is not gracing the pages of what is generally agreed to be the most hated institution on campus.

And believe me, it's not because the *Commentator* attacks the *Emerald*. People should know by now that I am more thick-skinned than that.

I'm simply sick and very tired of being lumped in with the libertarians on campus of which the *Commentator* is the standard-bearer for.

Take the latest issue of the *Oregon Voice*. It did a semi-decent job of parodying the *Commentator* (or the *Oregon Commonhater* as it called it). In it, the writers made frequent references to Rush Limbaugh as being a major influence on the real *Commentator's* writers.

Rush Limbaugh, though, is a conservative. He's pro-life. He's no libertarian. Despite his abrasive style, he has been called by the nation's premiere conservative commentary magazine, *National Review*, the "leader of the opposition."

As mentioned before, this doesn't mean I disagree with everything the *Commentator* prints. Libertarianism can often swerve into conservative ideologies.

On the issue of its tone, I would contend that at times the *Commentator* has become so shrill, it has damaged its position as a serious commentary magazine. The "Hate" issue was probably a good example of this. Believe me, satire is something I love. Orwell is a favorite of mine. But there's a fine line between satire and just "going-off" for the seeming mere joy of it.

Yet beyond just the pages of the *Commentator*, students and faculty alike need to realize that just because someone is to the right of the left, it does not mean they're conservative. Daring to say that multiculturalism has some flaws or capitalism is a good thing is not necessarily indicative of conservatism. The only thing that can be said for sure is that they're not liberals.

Being truly conservative means embracing social conservatism. For only upon those great ideals will our country truly progress in liberty.

Brian Womack is a columnist for the *Emerald*.

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