

## Packwood inquiry necessary but late

Nearly three years after *The Washington Post* published allegations of sexual misconduct, Sen. Bob Packwood is paying his dues.

The Senate Ethics Committee Wednesday released a resolution outlining 18 instances of alleged sexual misconduct and said it will pursue an investigation. It also found that Packwood may have violated Senate rules by trying to find his wife a job and by altering the contents of his diaries.

The committee will conduct a formal inquiry that could include public hearings. If the committee concludes that Packwood violated standards of conduct, he may face expulsion from the Senate or may lose his chairmanship on the Finance Committee.

It's about time. For the women who claim Packwood abused them, three years was too long to wait for an investigation. There is no excuse for delaying any inquiry into allegations of sexual misconduct, especially when the accused is an important public official responsible for the welfare of the state.

Until this week, Packwood's allegations were almost forgotten. When the Republicans gained control of the Senate, Packwood was able to regain the chairmanship of the finance committee. He managed to improve his public image and was positioning himself for re-election.

Fortunately, the Senate Ethics Committee stepped in before it was too late. It's not fair to let Packwood continue with business as usual while more than a dozen women claim he is guilty.

If Packwood is innocent, he should be able to continue his work as our senator free of any accusations or rumors. He would do a much better job as a senator if he is able to disprove the allegations.

The possibility that he may be guilty shadows any victory he makes on the Senate. A formal investigation is the only way to make sure our senator is worthy of our support.

Packwood's accusers have faced a discouraging fight. They have been pushed aside by the Senate, probably because of Packwood's long outstanding record. Their stories deserve more attention.

The accusations made against Packwood are serious. In one case he allegedly "ran his hand up the leg of a dining room hostess and touched her crotch area." In a case involving another woman, he "held her tightly while pressing his body into hers and kissed her on the mouth." These are just two of 18 accusations.

A thorough, hard-hitting investigation could clear up misunderstandings and would allow Packwood and his accusers to get on with their lives.

People in positions of power should not be able to escape allegations like these. Elected officials are entrusted with a great amount of responsibility and should not be allowed to abuse their offices.

An investigation is long overdue.



### LETTERS

#### Why advertise?

I cannot figure out why Mr. Gechter would want to advertise a lecture by Mr. Al-Asi through a commentary (*ODE*, May 15) that he felt would be hateful. Further, I do not understand why it would take him one year to make an allegation that Mr. Al-Asi's talk a year ago was hateful.

He makes the claim without presenting any quotes or evidence. Without any transcripts or tapes of his talk, it would be impossible to confirm any alleged allegations.

How can Mr. Al-Asi be anti-Semitic as Mr. Gechter claims when he is in fact Semitic? Is Mr. Gechter assuming that a Palestinian is not Semitic because he is not Jewish? That kind of thinking in itself is prejudicial.

A university community should value free speech and have trust and confidence in everyone's intelligence to hear a lecture and form their own opinions.

Oppressive governments such as Nazi Germany oppressed free speech to enable and facilitate their crimes against humanity. To oppress speech on the grounds of being hateful opens the door to stopping people from speaking out when necessary. Free speech and human rights go together and cannot be separated.

A free debate on U.S. Middle East policy as well as what is happening in the Middle East adds to the University community. A debate should occur, focusing on ideas without dehumanizing comments that question peoples' motives. Parties in the Middle East conflict appear, rather, to call each other names than talk to each other and address their comments.

The campus community can bring people from all sides on a people level for dialogue. It may just be possible to reach real understanding of varied views rather than having party lines from governments that have often refused to even talk to each other.

Martin E. Lewis  
Eugene

#### Why yell?

This letter is written to both vent frustration and hopefully provide at least a small insight to members of OPEU of the students' repercussions of the current strike.

On Friday morning, I was sitting in my physics class in Willamette Hall around 10:15 a.m., when all of a sudden an enormous organized shouting display began to unfold in the foyer, not more than 50 feet from my classroom. This continued for approximately five to seven minutes and it was the angry war cries of OPEU strikers.

Although I sympathize with and support the strikers, I find this display highly inconsiderate and, in fact, completely rude, due to the fact that classes were not only in session, but at least one of them, mine in particular, was in the middle of a fairly difficult midterm exam.

I don't think I need to say that the shouting was not very conducive to test-taking. This is, in fact, the second time one of my classes has been interrupted by the shouts of the strikers. However, this time was the most frustrating and disturbing. A great majority of the student and faculty population is supporting you and your efforts to receive what should rightfully be yours; how about a little support and consideration for us?

Chad L. Anderson  
Psychology

#### Why not hemp?

I would like to address Brian Womack in response to his editorial "Hemp legalization going to pot" (*ODE*, May 2). Regarding hemp, Brian, you should do more research before you publicize such reckless opinions. Hemp and pot are not the same species

of plant. It's not even feasible to grow pot along with hemp and it is a myth that the legalization of hemp would entail the legalization of marijuana.

But what if it did? Many would say that the war on drugs in this country is a war on our constitutional rights. From what you say, it sounds like you would favor even the prohibition of alcohol if it was still feasible. Why stop there, though? Why not prohibit everything that is potentially dangerous to individuals? Maybe we should all use dull-point scissors for our own good. Maybe we should outlaw downhill skiing, surfing and hang-gliding.

Who needs freedom when we could have a total police state protecting us from ourselves? That would be great. But as long as the government is looking out for safety so much, they should also look back into hemp. Anyone who has read the research on hemp agriculture and the history on how hemp has been demonized by various business interests in the United States can see how disturbingly naive your column was. Don't buy that farm, Brian.

Before the demonization of hemp, it was used to make everything from paper money to clothing to oil paint to the sails on the Mayflower. Hemp is an Earth-friendly alternative to many of the industries that are now ruining the environment (e.g. petroleum, paper, cotton). It can be grown without pesticides and is a high source of protein.

No, it can't be used to "build tanks and construct stealth bombers." It sounds to me, Brian, that you would destroy the Earth to preserve what you consider to be morality.

Bradley Butterfield  
Comparative Literature

### LETTERS POLICY

The *Oregon Daily Emerald* will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community.

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