

# EDITORIAL

## Sunscreen key to cancer prevention

As the days get longer and students flock to outdoor activities to take advantage of the beautiful sun, they should know they are soaking up more than rays.

Dangerous ultraviolet rays can damage skin and cause premature aging and skin cancer among other problems when people spend too much time in the sun.

Malignant melanoma, basal cell cancer and squamous cell cancer can all be results of overexposure to the sun. If you have to go out in the sun, wear protective clothing and lots of sunscreen.

A lot of people think it's glamorous to have a deep, dark tan—but it isn't. When skins begins to create pigment it is trying to protect itself from harmful sun beams. Tanning beds are no better than the real thing. They can also cause cancer and premature aging.

Skin cancer has become a concern because the ozone layer, which protects humans from the dangerous rays, is thinning. Chemicals such as CFCs, HCFCs and methyl bromide react with chemicals in the atmosphere and create the hole.

In 1935, one in 1,500 people was diagnosed with malignant melanoma. By 2000, the number is expected to reach one in 90, according to a May 24 ODE article. This is alarming. Skin cancer is dangerous, but it can be avoided.

The City of Eugene has taken significant steps to help save the ozone. An ordinance, created in the last few months, bans ozone-depleting products. Although the measure is receiving mixed reviews, it is a positive step in ozone protection.

Opponents of the ordinance say Eugene has no business creating such measures because it cannot change the status of the ozone. Although it's true that a city this size cannot make a significant difference on a global level, change must start somewhere.

All national legislation started at the local level. When other communities see that cities such as Portland, Eugene and San Francisco care enough to enact ozone-protection laws, they will follow along.

Supporters of ozone legislation hesitantly approve of the Eugene ordinance. Though the law does not have mandatory fines for repeat offenders, it goes one step further to include HCFCs in its list of ozone-depleting substances. This is a big step in local legislation because federal ozone laws do not ban HCFCs.

As one of many affected species on the planet, we have a vested interest in protecting the ozone layer. Regardless of whether there is a hole, the skin cancer statistics cannot be ignored.

It is vital to preserve our skin, and laying in the sun is not going to do it.

So when you head for the outdoors this summer make sure you have a bottle of sunscreen and some common sense.



### COMMENTARY

## Investing in people key to success

Rep. Peter DeFazio

Nothing is more important to raising incomes and living standards in this country than education. The economic facts are simple: The more you learn, the more you earn.

The lifetime earnings of college graduates are significantly higher than non-graduates. The gap in average earnings between high school and college graduates has doubled from 39 percent in 1979 to 80 percent in 1993. Education is the clear fault line of economic opportunity in this country.

That's why the Republican budget is particularly alarming. When Speaker Gingrich and his colleagues released their budget blueprint this week, we finally got an honest look at what the Contract With America will cost. For students and working families, the price is too high.

As GOP Representative George Radanovich told the *Wall Street Journal*, "If we had come out with this budget as our 'Contract,' they wouldn't have voted us in."

The budget plan will devastate millions of students and their families who rely on federal education loans for college. Of the \$35 billion in financial assistance the Department of Education plans for grants, loans and work-study programs, the GOP budget proposal would cut \$24 billion over the next seven years.

We've got to balance the budget. But it's wrongheaded to target students, seniors and working families while increasing the Pentagon's budget by \$92 billion and granting less than 1 percent of the wealthiest Americans (those earning more than \$250,000) a \$20,000 annual tax break.

Republicans chose to decimate education programs and student aid rather than tightening the belt on defense spending and make corporations and wealthy Americans pay their fair share of taxes.

As a recipient of financial aid who couldn't have attended col-

lege without help, I'm deeply disturbed by this proposed de-investment in our future.

Some of my colleagues forget it wasn't long ago when Republican Majority Leader Dick Armey, Sen. Phil Gramm and House Speaker Newt Gingrich went to school on student loans.

What was a good investment then is a good investment now. Student aid is planting a seed not only for an individual, but also for our economic future.

Students are already being priced out of higher education. The total cost of an undergraduate degree in today's dollars (including tuition, books, room and board) will be about \$40,000 for this year's first-year students.

While Republicans boast of their \$500-per-child tax cut for the middle class, they hide their intention to make college more expensive. Currently, parents who want to help their students go to college must save \$800 a month for the next four years for a public, four-year school — and this is prior to the Republican budget reductions in student aid.

Republicans are planning to eliminate the interest subsidy for students while they are in school. This plan will increase a student's total debt by 20 percent. An average student will pay \$5,000 more to attend college. Students who continue on to graduate study would see even larger increases. This additional cost will hit working families and poor students especially hard, forcing many to forego a higher education.

The Pell Grant program — once the foundation providing equal opportunity and access for all students — has declined sharply since 1976, from 44 percent to 21 percent of the average aid package. Now, Congress wants to freeze Pell Grants at their 1995 level, making the grants lose value each year as the cost of living rises.

In addition, the House budget proposal ends the need-based Perkins Loans, affecting more

than 700,000 students. And with the elimination of the State Student Incentive Grant, 1,600 of Oregon's neediest students would lose their aid.

The Republican philosophy is you make the economy grow by concentrating more and more wealth into the hands of fewer and fewer people at the top.

Higher education is being slashed by \$24 billion to help fund the Republican \$345 billion tax cuts, skewed toward the wealthiest Americans. Plain and simple, this is a rerun of trickle-down Reaganomics. During the trickle-down experiment of the 1980s, the middle class had its incomes go down and its taxes go up while the richest 2 percent had their income go up and their taxes go down.

Reagan and Bush sliced education funding and we can see who won and who lost. We have the greatest income and wealth gap since the 1920s with the top 1 percent of our country having more wealth than the bottom 90 percent combined. When our students are denied access to higher education, they lose their chance to climb the ladder of success and the gap widens.

We must invest in our people and our students' education. Our competitors have figured this out. Germany and Japan invest in education and training. They have a closer partnership between government, business, labor and education because they know when they're all on the same side, their countries win. They focus on how to get the most out of every human being, not just the wealthy.

The Republican budget will condemn the next generation of Americans to declining incomes and expectations. It continues the impoverishment of America, robbing middle-class families struggling to get ahead for the sake of corporate and upper income tax cuts. It is precisely the wrong medicine for what ails our nation.

Peter DeFazio represents Oregon's 4th District in the House of Representatives.

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