

Senate race stagnates at grade-school level

■ **OUR OPINION:** Voters should tell Smith and Wyden that name-calling won't win the election

If you want to know what the real issues are in the race for Oregon's U.S. Senate seat, unplug your television.

Since the end of the primary elections on Dec. 5, Democratic candidate Ron Wyden and Republican candidate Gordon Smith have been slinging the proverbial mud at each other across the state's television screens, blocking the light of truth from voters.

With the Jan. 30 election nipping at their heels, both candidates have accelerated the slough of negative ads against each other, opting to inundate voters with reasons why they shouldn't vote for the other candidate.

This type of political advertising has become standard fare for national offices in recent years, but Oregon has never seen anything quite this churlish or pointless before. Wyden has painted Smith as a self-absorbed, greedy and unethical rich boy who dumps effluent into the state's pristine waters.

Smith has called Wyden a liar and hammers home the message that Wyden is out-of-touch with his constituents by illustrating Wyden's inability to name the price of bread or find Bosnia on a globe.

Until now, beating up one's opponent in public was a tactic employed only by candidates who did not have strong service records or public recognition with which to woo voters (see George Bush, 1988). What is most confusing and embar-

assing about these personal attacks, is that both Smith and Wyden have impressive enough backgrounds to win the election without them.

Yet they insist on talking about each other rather than the issues only because they think it works.

Political strategists look at previous users of opponent attacks (see, again, the aforementioned Bush) and note how often kinder-gentler politicians lose seats to sucker-punching candidates. What they do not take into account, however, is how much public confidence (and tolerance) is lost in the process.

It's time for us to tell them. We, their would-be employers, have to tell them that we will refuse to vote for either candidate if they continue to waste our time with grade-school-level squabbles. It's time to pick up the phone.

Call Wyden's office at (503) 231-2300 and tell his message takers that if he doesn't stop the negative ads, you will write in Peter DeFazio's name on the ballot. Then, dial up Smith's headquarters at (503) 378-8173 and tell him you'll be writing in Norma Paulus if he continues to talk about his opponent instead of the issues. While you're at it, tell them that you're encouraging your friends and family to do the same.

This has been a short campaign (can we hear an "amen"?), and as the final date to replace Oregon's most famous proper approaches, the only fact we're sure of is that we're stuck choosing between Oregon's most famous gripers.



LETTERS

No Robin Hood

I have let your liberal paper ramble for too long unchallenged, and after reading your editorial "Smith uses tax refund to buy voters' support" (*ODE*, Nov. 30), I was so angered I feel I need to respond.

The "kicker" law gives back to people what they rightfully have earned and deserve. Should they choose to give that money to schools or charities, that is their own decision. If the state needs more money, then it should ask for more money. But if it receives what it expects to receive, it should give back everything in excess of that.

You mentioned an idea of giving everyone an equal share of the excess funds. Why should girl who paid \$50 in taxes from her newspaper route receive the same refund as someone who worked 40 hours a week at a factory or office?

I'm sure you're method of "Robin Hood" politics would fly with the homeless and all the people hanging out in front of 7-Eleven, but what about the people who earned their money and paid their taxes. They don't deserve to be robbed blind simply because they have cash.

Gordon Smith is merely standing up for taxpayers by helping to refund the money that is rightfully theirs. If it helps him to get elected, so be it. I'd rather have him in office than a robber.

Gregory Darusmont
Economics

Rape sickness

Jen Johnson's letter (*ODE*, Nov. 20) on rape was full of information, but unfortunately contained some misinformation as well.

She wrote that "women can only take measures to increase their chances of surviving an attack. [They] cannot prevent an assault." This is not quite true. Nobody can take steps to *lessen* the chance of an assault, even if he or she can't lower the chance to zero.

I think best in metaphors, so I think of rape as a disease (a bad

one, but not usually fatal). There are differences, of course — viruses don't have choices, are harder to blame, and there is much less stigma attached to getting sick — but the similarities are worth looking at.

If you want to avoid getting sick, you take care of yourself. You try to stay warm, avoid really sick people, sleep, and eat a balanced diet. Even if you do all that (and who can?), you can still get sick. But they lower your chance of getting sick. If you don't take care of yourself and get sick, it would be ludicrous to think that you "deserved it" or were trying to get sick.

Similarly, if you want to avoid rape, you can take steps to *help* prevent becoming a victim. They don't eliminate the risk, just lessen it. If you don't follow them you might be foolish, but you're still not to blame if you are attacked. *Only* the attacker is to blame.

Jed Herman
Mathematics

Emerald funding

I commend your hard work and perseverance on publishing a daily campus newspaper. Most of your articles are thorough and well-reported. I can't imagine the discipline that goes into the publication of a daily paper.

However, as the Editor of *X Magazine* I can relate on a similar level. Although we are a monthly magazine, much hard work goes into our publication, especially because we are self-sufficient. We accept none of the University's funds, except when it advertises with us. I don't believe the *ODE* should take approximately \$129,000 per year of student fees.

Please explain to me why your prices are four times higher than ours, you get more advertising than we do, yet you still take student fees? It seems to me you could find a more appropriate way to organize your finances. Our prices are 1/4 that of yours, and still, without taking any student fees (we are a business run by students who started from \$0), we manage to come out even.

Maybe I am not giving you enough credit. I don't know how the *ODE*'s finances are run, so I shouldn't criticize them. Although the *ODE* keeps the campus community aware of what's going on, I don't find it so important as to use more than \$100,000 per year.

Secondly, you seem to fail to recognize any of the other publications on campus. Recently, you published an article on *View Magazine*. You spoke about how amazing it was that University graduates were able to publish a local magazine, yet you fail to recognize the publications that are run by students.

The *ODE* has a responsibility to represent the University without any biases. Therefore, I believe you should recognize your fellow publications. While all of them may not have the advantage of massive student fees, they all strive to represent and entertain students.

Again, I appreciate the *ODE*. You publish a quality paper, but so do many others in Eugene. You are the only publication in Eugene that is expected to represent all students. Because you reach a nonspecific group, let me remind you of the publications that are more specific. One of them happens to be *X Magazine*. While you report local politics, we interviewed a Beastie Boy, write about sex and have car reviews. Why don't we support one another instead of ignoring one another?

Jennifer Shea Johnston
Editor, *X Magazine*

LETTERS POLICY

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

Letters to the editor must be limited to no more than 250 words, legible, signed and the identification of the writer must be verified when the letter is submitted.

The *Emerald* reserves the right to edit any letter for length or style.

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