

Living, education limits on welfare are positive

OUR OPINION: Reform plan will work if unsafe situations are noted

With half a million babies being born each year to teens, President Clinton is taking executive actions to force states to end welfare benefits to teen-age parents who refuse to finish school or live with a responsible adult.

The action is aimed at solving problems of long-term welfare dependency through preventing the payment of benefits to these teens who move out of their parents homes and drop out of school.

The plan would target these irresponsible teens, who are unfortunately responsible for these babies and cease to fund their welfare-dependent lifestyle. Clinton plans to ensure that in the future a baby won't give these teens the right or the money to leave home and drop out of school.

This new reform will require teen mothers to live with their parents or a responsible adult. There will be a precept in the plan that will make allowances for teens in abusive situations at home.

The only negative aspect of Clinton's plan is the possibility that some recipients will be forced to live with abusive parents despite the good intentions of the abusive-circumstances precept.

It is often the case that teens who are in abusive homes do not have the courage or the self-esteem to challenge their living situations. It is possible that a plan like this would only harm these exceptions to the welfare-mother stereotype.

This reform would unintentionally punish these dependent teens by placing restrictions on their living situation choices that could be detrimental.

This sort of legislation would be nothing new to Oregon. In September 1995, the state passed a law requiring teen-age mothers receiving welfare to live with parents or live in another safe situation.

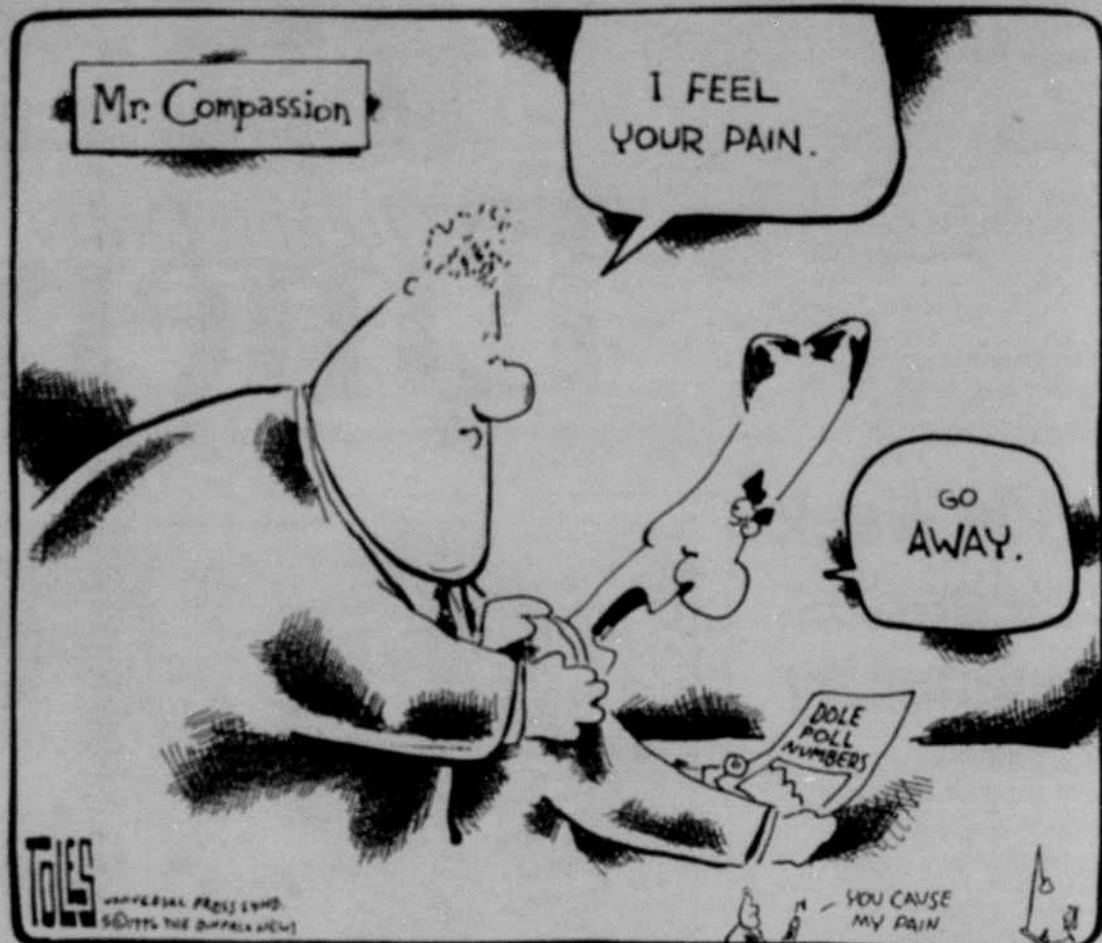
Though we cannot be certain that these teens are placed in safe living situations, at least these mothers can still be enrolled in the Oregon JOBS program. In July, Oregon will begin to implement these live-at-home welfare requirements made possible by federal waivers received in March.

These requirements will help solve part of the problem of long-term welfare dependency and will encourage teen-age mothers who live off the welfare system to jump back into the education system, live with their parents and hopefully grow into responsible adults themselves.

After all, half of all adults on Aid to Families with Dependent Children, which totals about 2 million people, had their first children when they were in their teens.

Unfortunately, welfare reform will not decrease the number of teens who are having unsafe sex and bringing babies into this world that they cannot emotionally or financially support.

The solution to this problem lies in needed changes in America's presentation of sex in the media and sex education classes.



Tolerate incidental fees; they serve you

After reading the headline in last Thursday's Emerald that stated, "Ballot measures will increase incidental fees 9 percent," I wasn't surprised.

It seems like whenever I begin to think another year of school won't completely impoverish me, a new fee is added. They are usually not the fees I support. But that is part of the democratic process.

I will wholeheartedly stand behind and accept the student government's right to snatch money from me that I will never see again and place it into clubs that I usually either don't care about, don't have time to donate toward or just wouldn't feel quite welcome attending.

While I think incidental fees could be handled a lot better in some cases, I cannot be too strongly opposed to them.

What surprises me most, though, is how many students seem to be willing to shoot themselves in the foot to save a few dollars — few being relative of course: an in-state student will spend over \$10,000 in a year of schooling, only about 4 percent of which covers incidental fees.

The one incidental fee that receives the most undeserved criticism is the Lane Transit District bus pass.

Every term I hear students exclaim, "We're paying for the busses. I don't even ride the busses. I'm paying for someone else to ride the bus? I want my money back!" I can't forget hearing these students asking, "Gosh, what do they think we're made off? Money?"

I used the bus pass all last year without realizing exactly where the money was coming from. When I heard that it was absorbed into our student fees I eagerly searched every bill for something stating transportation costs as \$100. I never found it.

When it came on the ballot last year, the cost was not \$100 or even \$50. It was right around \$6.50. The 1996-1997 fee will be \$6.65. I couldn't help but wonder what all the fuss was about.

How could people be so adamantly opposed to a mere six dollar fee? That is barely over 10 percent of the usual three-month adult fee of \$60. Rarely do you find something with a cost of 90 percent off, like the LTD term-long bus pass.

LTD delivers passengers to their doorsteps and offices all over the Eugene-Springfield area. I can get virtually anywhere with my bus pass — I have gone to restaurants, movie theaters and even a tattoo parlor.

I have ridden the bus during the heat of spring when the air conditioning is going full blast and the chill of winter when the heater warms my toes. Never once did I think it was a waste of money. Only after calling LTD did I actually discover how fortunate the average student is. LTD not only extensively covers the metropolitan

area, but travels 55 miles out of town. Travel that far on Greyhound and you're talking at least \$10.

"But you don't have a car," anti-bus fee proponents tell me. "You have to ride the bus." I don't have a car because I don't think I need one. Eugene is home to the best local transportation system I have ever encountered.

I have taken mass transit systems in Eugene, Portland, Seattle and Vancouver, B.C. Because the city of Eugene is smaller, LTD easily beats the larger cities in relation to convenience and the number of routes available.

In the Portland-Metro area you always have to go downtown to get anywhere, and downtown can be far away depending on where you're going. Going to school by bus in the summer takes a good two hours. The commute is about 30 minutes by car. There was no contest — I ended up driving.

Seattle tries to be as accessible as Eugene, and the result is that they stop at what seems like every driveway, taking about an hour to get three miles. Fun, fun, fun.

The longest bus ride I have ever heard of in the Eugene area was a little over an hour, taken by my roommate.

She went from the University station to the Eugene Station. This trip usually takes about 5 minutes, but she decided to get on the bus that went to the Eugene Station via Springfield. Maybe not a bad idea, but definitely not a time-saving one.

My only complaint about LTD is the unfortunate lack of bike racks on their busses. I love the fact that Portland busses have racks so you can ride as far as you want and then hop on the bus if you get tired or wet.

Also, bike racks on busses can enable you to reach your bike-riding destination still fresh enough to enjoy the country scenery.

But even this complaint will soon be outdated. According to Andy Vobora, LTD marketing employee, busses will be being equipped with bike racks starting June 16. By the time school starts in the fall, they should be well past the introductory period.

Best of all, if you really don't use the busses, you can get a refund. Just by turning in your sticker, you get that entire \$6.65 back. Instead of having transportation all over the county for the entire term, you can spend it on five gallons of gas. That bargain fails to appeal to me. I'm keeping my sticker.

Kay Krautscheid, a sophomore majoring in biology and psychology, is a columnist for the Emerald. E-mail welcome: kayk@gladstone.

Oregon Daily Emerald

P.O. BOX 1155 EUGENE, OREGON 97402

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published daily Monday through Friday during the school year and Tuesday and Thursday during the summer by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co., Inc., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon. A member of the Associated Press, the Emerald operates independently of the University with offices at Suite 300 of the Erb Memorial Union.

Unsigned editorials represent the opinion of the Emerald editorial board; signed columns represent the opinion of the columnist.

The Emerald is private property. The unlawful removal or use of papers is prosecutable by law.

Editor-in-Chief: David Thorn

Managing Editor: Marcolene Edwards

Night Editor: Jennifer Carter

Community: Sherry Rainey, editor; Melissa LeBahn, Dawn Paugh, Brian Womack

Higher Education: Regina Brown, editor; Jean M. Bond, Laura Kapshra, Jennifer Schmitt

Student Activities: Jennifer Carter, editor; Ashley Bach, Kristin Bailey, Doug Irving

Sports: Trevor Kearney, editor; Andrea DeYoung, assistant editor; Chris Hansen, Pete Schneider

Entertainment/Supplements: Nicole Krueger, editor

Features: Lara Pittman, editor; De-Link: Joshua Olson, editor

Editorial: David Bartlett, Nicole Krueger, editors; Katy Anderson, Jesse Bohrer-Clancy, Keith Cunningham, Larry Huff, Kay Krautscheid, Sonja Sherwood

Copy Desk: Karl Hastings, copy chief; Paige Bills, Anna Beth Grimes, Tracy Picha, Paul Van Sickle

Photography: Matthew Siffer, editor; Andrew Brackensick, En Mei Chang, Elena Gerber, Shannon Kitouf, Darica Waxman

Graphics: Dennis Bell, Matt Garton

General Manager: July Riedl

Advertising: Becky Merchant, director; Anne Amador, Lee Yan Beh, Yujin Cho, Marco Ching, Justin Gober, Nikki Harper, Matt Johnson, Heather Johnson, Sarah Mitchell, Trina Shanahan

Production: Michele Ross, manager; Ingrid White, coordinator; Sharna Able, Rachel Cunningham, Laura Daniel, Nicole Herzmark, Carrie Jones, Tara Knight, Molly McCarty, Carly Schriener, Allison Stormo, Michael Young

Business: Kathy Carbone, supervisor; Judy Connolly; Distributor: Jeff Johnson, John Long, Ferenc Rakocz

Classified: Tara Gaultrey, manager; Jennifer Neal, Jill Setten

Newsroom: (541) 348-5511

Display Advertising: (541) 348-3712

Business Office: (541) 348-5512

Classified Advertising: (541) 348-4343