

Supreme Court ruling means new tolerance

OUR OPINION: Rights of all citizens should be defended by courts

Last week, the Supreme Court overturned Amendment 2, an amendment that banned anti-discrimination protection for homosexuals in Colorado. The Supreme Court's 6-3 ruling has opened the entire nation's eyes to the fact that gay rights are not about sex but about every citizen's right to equal protection under the law.

One of the most amazing facts about the Supreme Court's movement is that Oregon was one of seven states that filed an amicus brief in the case. Apparently, Oregon's brief proved to be quite persuasive because the justices' ruling was formed through its argument.

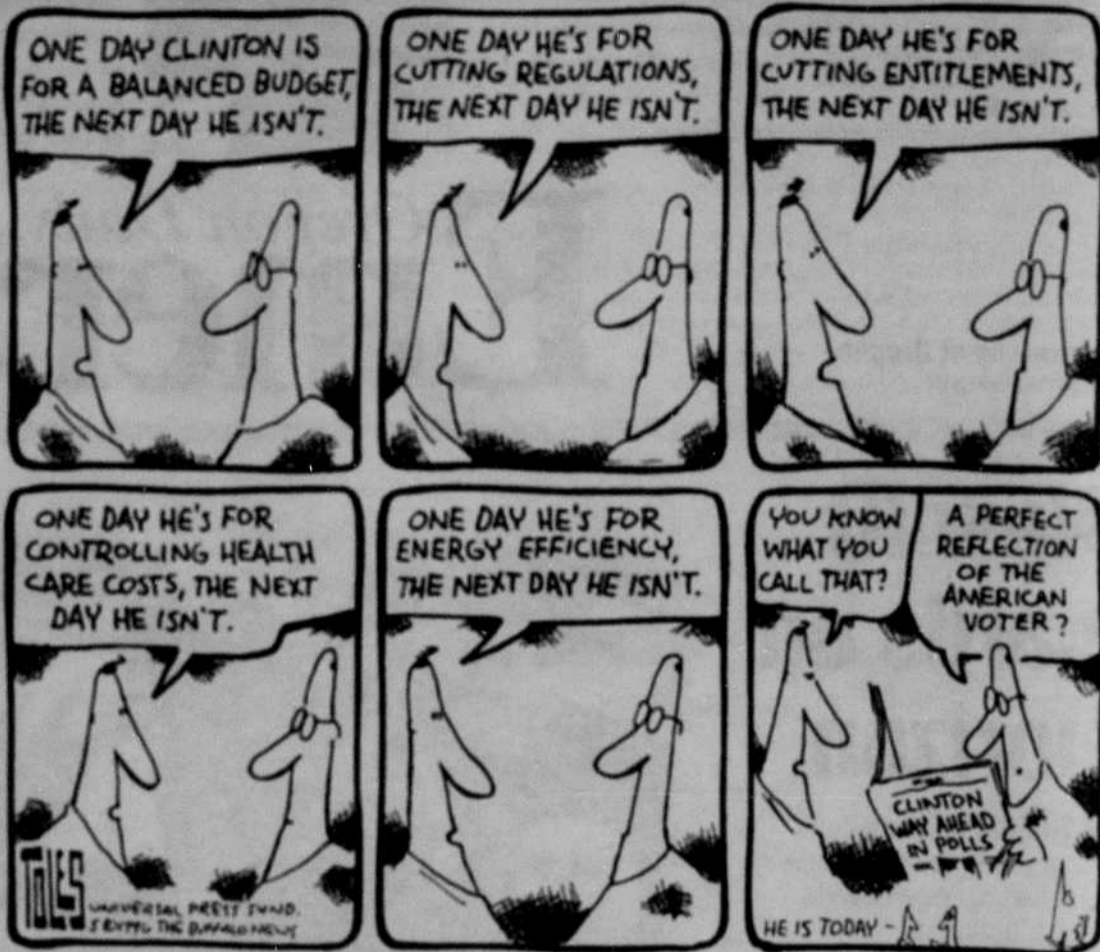
With the OCA currently collecting signatures in a hurried attempt to get their measure on the November ballot, Oregon could not have taken a better political stance at a better time. Hopefully, this ruling will force homophobic religious right organizations to realize the judicial system is no longer on their side. Unfortunately, before Amendment 2 was ruled unconstitutional, the Supreme Court supported the religious right and helped reinforce the stereotype that gay rights were about sex.

The Bowers vs. Hardwick decision made by the Supreme Court nearly ten years ago created a platform for the anti-gay rights movement. Since that monumentally unjust ruling, many cases of gay discrimination

have either been ignored or discarded by the Supreme Court. But the May 20 motion will hopefully alter the court's perception of these cases.

Amendment 2 was created and sponsored by Colorado for Family Values, a group that most likely shares a similar purpose with the OCA. Though 53 percent of Colorado's voting population approved Amendment 2, which is a scary enough as it is, the Amendment should have been declared unconstitutional as soon as it reached the ballot. But with this nation's unfortunate history of homophobia, ranging from Clinton's "don't ask, don't tell" policy in the military to the impossibility for gay couples to be legally married, it is no wonder that this amendment made so much progress before it was struck down.

This ruling should be used as a reminder that civil rights are still being denied to entire groups of people. Though many people might say that civil rights are available to all citizens, citing the African American civil rights movement of the 1960s as their prime example, there are many other races and groups of people who are still suffering from discrimination. California's Proposition 187 is an example of this discrimination and prejudice, generalizing that most Latinos are illegal immigrants and deserve to be deprived of health care and a basic education. But the repeal of Amendment 2 gives hope that unjust legislation that singles out or ignores entire groups of people will be overturned or prevented in the future.



LETTERS

Doesn't understand

Keith Cunningham's latest convoluted diatribe (*ODE*, May 16) proves only his complete ignorance of women's issues and concerns.

There is nothing wrong with being angry and drawing attention to the brutal rape that occurred on our campus. We realize that date and acquaintance rapes comprise the vast majority of rapes that occur, but that does not decrease the impact of this crime.

The goal of Saferide is to decrease rapes and sexual assault on campus and to provide access to nighttime events for women who would otherwise feel unsafe walking at night.

We do not appreciate his claim that we deliver women to rapists. Also, insinuating that groups like Saferide are "turning our backs" to all other forms of sexual assault is ludicrous.

Would Keith prefer that we ignore the violent rape that took place May 12? The emotions and concerns that have surfaced over the past week are worth everyone's attention.

There are other groups on campus, such as the Speaker's Bureau, the Office of Student Life, the Residence Halls and the Women's Center that educate students about date and acquaintance rape.

Perhaps if Cunningham would look around and take the responsibility of educating himself on these issues, we would be spared his ignorant comments concerning women.

As long as Cunningham is pretentious enough to assume that he can speak for women, he will never begin to understand feminism.

Jenna Wasson
Project Saferide co-director
Arin Wallenius
ASUO Women's Center

Survivors

First, I want to thank Doug Irving for his fine coverage (*ODE*, May 17) of the Take Back the Night Rally on Thursday evening, May 16. It was a moving and important event, and its value was conveyed by Irving. However, there is one significant point on which I need to comment.

In his description of my participation in the event, Irving twice used the term "victim" — once in reference to me, and once regarding the other women whose poems I read.

The term "rape victim" is one I never use to describe myself or others who have been sexually assaulted because it tends to imprison the person who has been attacked and puts them into a position of powerlessness, fear and further "victimization."

Instead, I prefer the term "survivor," because it places the emphasis on our strength in living through and overcoming our trauma.

Rape is such a horrible crime because it invades the body and soul, undermining the person's sense of value and identity. But when a woman who has been raped begins to see herself as a survivor, she

can shift her focus away from the event and its dehumanizing effects, and begin to rediscover her value and strength.

Calling a rape survivor a "victim" pushes her back inside the emotional prison she has fought so hard to escape.

While this shift from victim to survivor is an important part of our healing process, it is often not easy. Those around us can help by sharing not only the changed terminology, but the changed attitude that must accompany it.

Indeed, this shift is what "Take Back the Night" is all about: empowering women and teaching men that violence against us is unacceptable.

Elizabeth Claman
Graduate student, Comparative Literature

Smith's triumphs

I heard a collective groan rise from the masses when the attack ads on Tom Bruggere began airing recently. The frustration over negative ads has been stirred again, and at Gordon Smith's headquarters in Lake Oswego, Smith's staffers felt the same displeasure.

Smith was in no way responsible for the ads — they were produced independently by the Republican National Committee. Smith has placed a personal call to RNC to ask that the ads be pulled.

Gordon Smith is a man of integrity who wants to be Oregon's next U.S. Senator. His response to the negative ads is only one example of his commitment to Oregon's needs. Oregonians want clean campaigns.

Also, students need access to an affordable education, and Smith was a key player in allotting Oregon Lottery funds to college scholarships.

He opposes the Newt Gingrich plan to cut student loans. The president of Crime Victims United endorses Smith for passing tougher crime laws and penalties, specifically ones aimed at sex offenders and stalking. Finally, Smith is working to save Medicare and the Oregon Health Plan.

I have met him on several occasions and admire how he answers questions directly without the usual rhetoric heard from most politicians.

I support Gordon Smith because of his triumphs as the state legislator's Senate President, his plans for Washington and his character.

Gail Johnson
College Republican Federation
Co-chairwoman

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.

Oregon Daily Emerald

P.O. BOX 3155 EUGENE, OREGON 97403

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 Thoon

Managing Editor: Marcelene Edwards

Night Editor: David Bartlett

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

Higher Education: Regina Brown, editor; Jean M. Bond, Laura Kaptshere, 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

Freelance: Lara Pittman, editor; **De-List:** Joshua Olson, editor

Editorial: David Bartlett, Nicole Kristal, editors; Kelly Anderson, Jesse Bohrer-Clancy, Keith Cunningham, Larry Hatt, Kay Krautscheid, Sonja Sherwood

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

Photography: Matthew Stiffler, editor; Andrew Brackensack, En Min Chang, Elena Gerber, Shannon Klodoff, Darcie Weisman

Graphics: Dennis Boll, Matt Garton

General Manager: Judy Reed

Advertising: Becky Merchant, director; Anne Amador, Lee Yen Bell, Yujin Chi, Marco Cheng, Justin Guber, Nikk Harper, Matt Johnson, Heather Johnston, Sarah Mitchell, Trina Shanahan

Production: Michele Ross, manager; Ingrid White, coordinator; Shawna Abele, Rachel Cunningham, Laura Daniel, Nicole Herzmark, Carrie Jones, Tara Knight, Mully McCanta, Carly Schrammer, Allison Stormo, Michael Young

Business: Kaitly Carbone, supervisor; Judy Connolly; **Distributors:** Jeff Johnson, John Long, Ferenc Rakoczi

Classified: Tara Gaultney, manager; Jennifer Neel, Jill Seton

Newsroom: (541) 346-5511; **Display Advertising:** (541) 346-3712

Business Office: (541) 346-5512; **Classified Advertising:** (541) 346-4343