

THIS WEEK
MONDAY: Opinion
TUESDAY: Politics
WEDNESDAY: Opinion
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FRIDAY: Opinion

POLITICS

a voter's guide to the 1996 election and a look at life on the campaign trail

SOUND OFF
 What do you think?
 Are you more likely
 to vote-by-mail or
 go the polls?
 Let us know.

POLITICS
Briefly

Student government makes registering to vote easy



Haven't registered to vote, but want to?
 It's likely University student government volunteers will find you.

Throughout the next couple of weeks they'll bring voter registration cards to populated areas including the bookstore, photo identification lines, residence halls and program open houses. They also sent voter registration cards to students via mail and have provided drop boxes around campus.

"We want to get students where they are, and not make them come to us," said Leslie Gray, state affairs coordinator for student government.

Their goal is to register 8,000 students before the Nov. 5 election, the highest number of any Oregon State System of Higher Education school and almost 50 percent of the student population.

In 1994, the University was recognized in *Mother Jones* magazine for registering 7,400 students to vote.

Registration forms are also available at The Lane County Elections Division office at 135 E. Sixth Ave. and most government buildings.

The deadline to register for the Nov. 5 election is Oct. 15 at 5 p.m.

Negative advertising draws voters to the polls



Slinging mud may actually increase voter turn-out, a University political scientist said.

Priscilla Southwell found that voters often respond to negative ballot measure advertising by voting. When people fear the consequences of a measure passing, voter turn-out increases, she said.

However, negative campaigns between candidates often have the opposite effect, she said. In this case, voters feel neither candidate is worth their vote and stay away from the polls. Negative campaigns can turn away moderate voters who would be more likely to vote for an opponent, she explained.

— compiled by Shana Cohn and Doug Irving

Vote-by-mail possible for all elections

THE FUTURE:
 Commission recommends vote-by-mail be used for all future elections in the state

By Shana Cohn
 Politics Editor

Leaving the comfort of your apartment or residence hall to vote at the polls could become a thing of the past in Oregon.

Members of a 12-person commission appointed by Secretary of State Phil Kiesling recently recommended extending vote-by-mail to all elections.

"We found that a strong majority of Oregonians prefer voting by mail," Commission Chairwoman Jean Tate said in a news release. "In weighing the pros and cons over an eight month period, our commission came down firmly on the side of expanding use of mail ballots."

The commission voted unanimously to extend vote-by-mail to all primary elections, and by a vote of eight to two, extended it for all elections except the presidential election. Two commission members were out of the country during the vote.

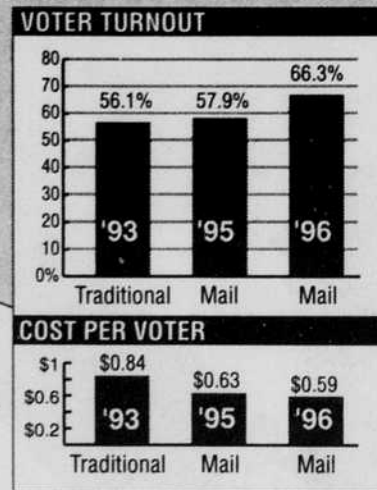
Kiesling will use the commission's findings to push for a permanent vote-by-mail system during the January session of the Legislature. In 1995, the Legislature passed a bill to make all elections by mail, but it was vetoed by Governor John Kitzhaber.

"Phil is very hopeful the legislature will pass it again and the governor will sign it," said Cynthia Griffin, executive assistant to Kiesling. "For [Kiesling] it's past time to do this because continuing to vote through absentee ballots and polling places is inefficient and confusing."

Currently, vote by mail is prohibited in primary and general elections. But Griffin said people are doing it anyway. "When a

Mail Ballots Work

Participation in Vote-by-Mail elections increased while the costs decreased.



SOURCE: Oregon Secretary of State

Graphic by:
 CHRIS HUTCHINSON
 COSMOS CORBIN
 DENNIS BOLT

vote by mail election is not offered, Oregonians are voting absentee in record numbers."

Absentee voters, people who request a mail ballot during polling elections, have continued to increase over the last six years. In the May 1996 primary election, absentee voters accounted for more than 36 percent of all ballots cast, up from 22 percent in the 1994 general election, according to the Secretary of State's office. In some Oregon counties, half of the voters are registered absentee.

The commission made its recommendations after studying the use of vote-by-mail in two special U.S. Senate elections held in December and January. They were the first statewide partisan elections conducted entirely by mail.

The commission also found that vote-by-mail elections had higher participation, were less expensive and more convenient.

But commission opponents said vote-by-mail makes voting too easy.

Turn to **THE FUTURE**, Page 4

THE IMPACT: Students benefit from vote-by-mail if they keep their voter registration updated

By Shana Cohn
 Politics Editor

Whatever your voting method preference — a drive to the polls or sealing an envelope and licking a stamp — some believe voting by mail benefits students.

"It gives students the excellent potential to strengthen the power of their vote," said Mark Rhinard, a political science graduate from the University. "Most students are coming to realize that vote by mail is more convenient, gives them more opportunity to study the issues and vote wisely."

Rhinard was a member of the 12-person commission that evaluated "vote-by-mail" and recommended extending its use to all elections in Oregon. But, he said, in order for vote-by-mail to work for students, they must update their voter registration every time they move or changes parties.

"There are a very low percentage of students that stay in the same place from election to election," said Leslie Gray, ASUO state affairs coordinator.

Lisa Gillie, a graduate student in sports psychology at the University, said voting by mail is practical for students.

"You don't have to worry about getting off of work or going to the polls at a certain time to vote," said Gillie. "It's not always convenient to travel to those destinations."

Although she hasn't voted by mail, Gillie believes it would also give students more time to study the issues at their own pace.

Even so, vote-by-mail hasn't come without concerns. Because the student population is highly mobile, the commission has studied the possibility of increased voter fraud.

"We did look into scores of ballots received at fraternity houses where people have moved away and others could forge signatures," said Jim Westwood, Portland commission member. But the commission found no greater incidence of fraud in vote by mail elections. "It's easy to do, but hard to get away with," Westwood said.

Election offices are required to cross check signatures on every ballot received and there have been few cases where signatures didn't match.

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Display Advertising: (541) 346-3712

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ON THE BALLOT

A look at some of the 23 ballot measures that will be facing voters in the Nov. 5 election

THE MEASURE

Measure 39

WHAT IT WOULD DO

Amend the Oregon constitution to prohibit government and private insurance companies from discriminating against any health care providers. It also would define "health care provider". Insurance agencies could control costs as long as they did not violate the measure.

ARGUMENTS FOR

Alternative treatments, including acupuncture and naturopathic treatments, would be insured. Because such treatments may cost less than traditional treatments, the measure could reduce health care costs. Could extend the Oregon Health Plan (OHP) to more Oregonians.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST

Could drive up health care costs by up to \$30.4 million as well as boosting the cost of workers' compensation. Could undermine the OHP. Puts confusing language into the Oregon Constitution.

THE MEASURE

Measure 44

WHAT IT WOULD DO

Raise taxes on cigarettes from 1.4 cents to 2.9 cents per cigarette and on other tobacco products from 35 percent to 65 percent of the wholesale price. Revenue would go to the OHP and to smoking prevention.

ARGUMENTS FOR

Would curb youth tobacco use by raising prices. Could help fund OHP with additional revenue. Would also provide more revenue for smoking prevention programs.

ARGUMENTS AGAINST

Would unfairly tax tobacco users. Provides the OHP with an unstable financial source. The legislature could cut funding out of the OHP to counter any increase brought in by ballot measure 44.

SOURCES: Oregon Secretary of State Elections Division & The Register-Guard