

**SOUND OFF**  
 Did the U.S. House make the right decision in reelecting Newt Gingrich as Speaker? Let us know.

# OPINION

editorials, letters, commentary and perspective

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## Overheard...

"I hope your children die of cancer."  
**Hugh Grant**  
 to pestering photographers in Rio.



"When you lead a revolution, you've got to expect this kind of hostile attention."  
**Newt Gingrich**  
 on the ethics charges being made against him.

"To be plopped in front of a television instead of being read to, talked to or encouraged to interact with other human beings is a huge mistake and that's what happens to a lot of children."  
**Madonna**  
 the television demagogue herself.

"I'm certainly going to simplify my life a little bit."  
**Burt Reynolds**  
 on being \$11 million in debt.

"It's a fraud."  
**O.J. Simpson**  
 on pictures that allegedly show him in the same shoes that left bloody footprints at the murder scene.

"She has a special lackey who follows after her with an ashtray. She smokes everywhere. At official banquets, receptions, at parties, at old-people's homes and so on."  
**Swedish journalist Hagge Geigert**  
 on the Danish Queen, Margrethe II.

"These are just really shallow, shallow, stupid things that don't count... it's about entertaining people. And at best educating them."  
**Drew Barrymore's**  
 on of her material successes.

"It was due to my lack of discretion that this kind of incident occurred. I feel that I must deeply apologize to the Japanese people and government."  
**Japanese Ambassador Morishia Aoki**  
 on his responsibility in the Peru hostage crisis.

"I'm certainly going to simplify my life a little bit."  
**Burt Reynolds**  
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## 'Kick' education funding up a level

**OUR OPINION:** The Legislature should use funds from a state income tax kicker for public education

The 69th Oregon Legislature convenes on Monday ready to deal with many issues, and public education is at the top of the list. Most legislators agree schools are in dire need of help, but exactly what steps should be taken to improve state education is far from certain.

Gov. Kitzhaber knows what he wants to do. In his 1997-99 budget proposal, announced in December, the Democrat governor advocated the allocation of a \$383 million tax surplus to schools.

If state lawmakers are at a general consensus on the future of education, they vary widely on what should be done with the surplus — primarily along party lines. The \$383 million derives from the extra income tax revenue the state received from citizens this year. By law, it must be returned to the citizens in the form of a tax rebate.

Kitzhaber wants to bypass that state law and give the money to schools. We tend to agree with him. Opposing legislators, mostly Republicans, stand by valid arguments. The citizens are entitled to the money (about 67 dollars each for citizens with income under \$40,000, \$495.62 for income over \$40,000), they say, and should receive it promptly.

Unfortunately, with the advent of Measure 47, voters have left the legislature and the state of education in a bind. Without the \$383 million "kicker," public schools —

from Portland grade schools to the University — have a grim future, at best. No matter how much lip service lawmakers pay to education, without drastic measures the overcrowding and the layoffs and the cutbacks will only get worse.

The kicker is the only realistic solution currently being discussed. It can be seen as a loophole, even cheating, but it's the only way to improve the decrepit conditions that public schools face every day. Teachers routinely teach classes of 50 or more in the Portland public school district. Drastic layoffs are commonplace at grade schools across the state. And at public colleges, including the University, tuition has increased by 80 percent since 1990.

Republican legislators would like to believe that education can be saved without the kicker. But with an estimated \$1 billion cut in the State General Fund, the source of funding for higher education, and a \$459 million loss to schools anticipated this year as a result of Measure 47, that claim is only wishful thinking.

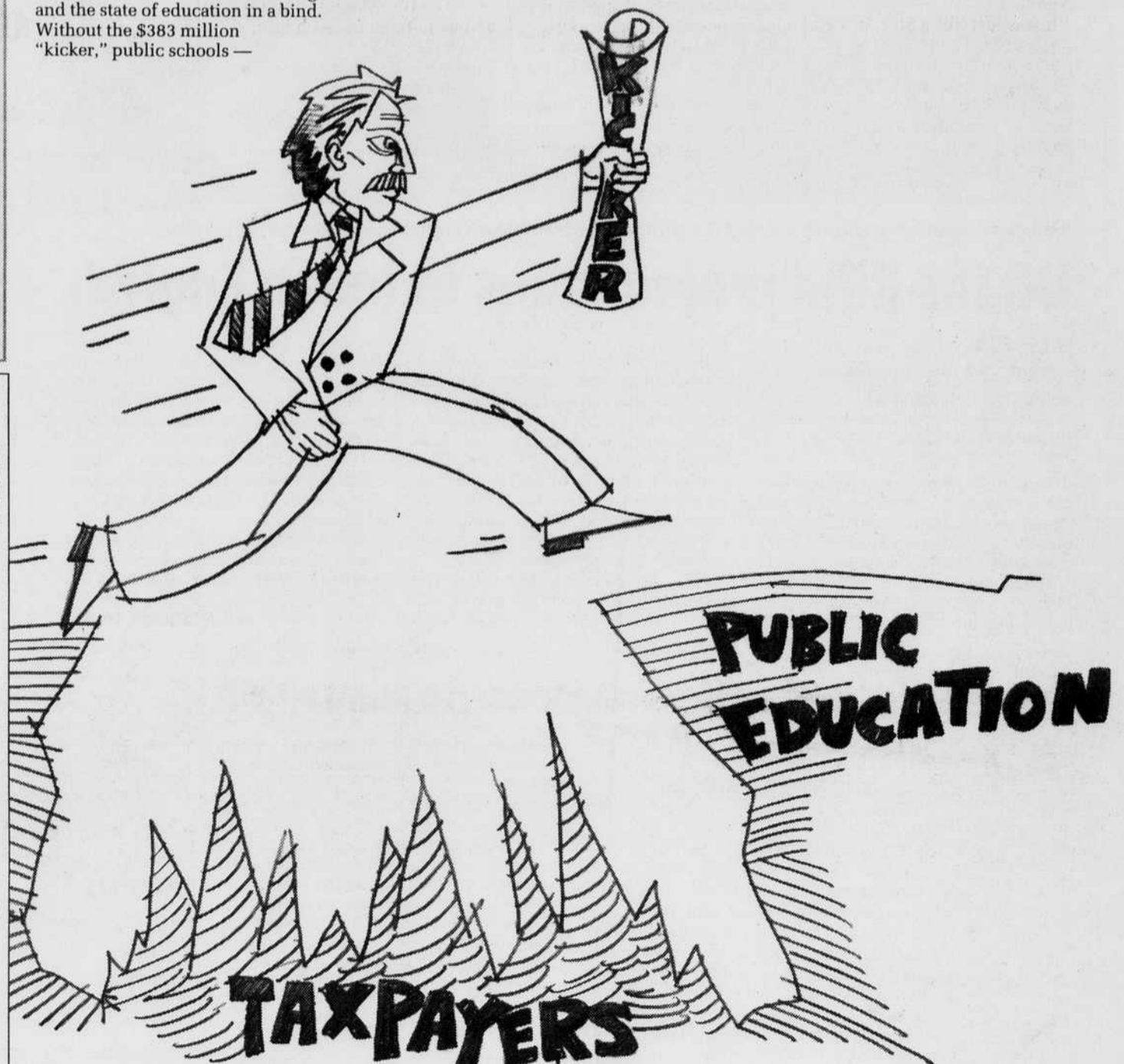
Indeed, we wish millions of dollars weren't kept from citizens' pockets either. But education is an issue that affects all of us and therefore must be given the appropriate attention. Citizens and lawmakers are short-sighted if they don't recognize the extreme importance of educating Oregonians in the right way —

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with quality.

The kicker cannot be referred to education if the legislature does not agree with Kitzhaber to bypass state law. With 51 Republicans and 39 Democrats in the House and Senate, a final decision on the matter is impossible to predict. Some lawmakers have even called for the issue to be presented to the voters. But whoever makes the decision, giving the tax kicker to schools is the right answer.

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board.



## Oregon Daily Emerald

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