

Project Saferide

In the upcoming ASUO elections, Project Saferide, a rape prevention shuttle service, is asking students for their support. We are asking for a \$0.65 increase per term, per student, in student incidental fees for the 1997-1998 school year.

The additional \$29,951 from the fees will be used to purchase a wheelchair accessible van. Before you vote, please consider this information:

During the 1996-1997 school year, Project Saferide has provided 13,964 rides for campus women.

In the same time period, we have had to turn 1,323 rides away. This has been due to space constraints, which would be alleviated by a fourth vehicle.

To truly be compliant with the American Disabilities Act, it is crucial to have an on-site wheelchair accessible vehicle. Although we can arrange a ride for a female wheelchair user with a local taxi service, the process is very convoluted and requires advance notice of 24 hours to three days.

With an on-site, wheelchair-accessible van, we could offer same-day rides to wheelchair riders.

Despite the vehicle's total price tag of \$33,754, Project Saferide is only asking for \$29,951 from student fees. That balance of \$3,803 has been obtained by Project Saferide, via a \$2000 grant and \$1,803 in fund raising efforts. Through our bake sales, February concert and December Silent Auction, we have raised \$1,600 this year alone.

Project Saferide is unwaveringly committed to the intertwined goals of women's safety on campus and equal access to nighttime events. Please help us to attain these equality based goals by voting "yes" on Project Saferide's Wheelchair Accessible Van ballot measure! Thank you for your continuing support.

Patricia Drew
Sociology
Carrie Whipple
Theater Arts

Big money

In American politics today, a set of wealthy interests substantially determine who runs for public office and who wins elections. This comes as no news flash. Recently, we have been bombarded by an onslaught of stories about campaign finance reform. Unfortunately, media's approach to campaign finance reform has neglected the centrality of the issue.

Big money in politics is not just another political issue. It is a systematic problem that will not be corrected until the citizens demand change. Tension is mounting, and politicians are being forced to address the issue. However, in our elections, incumbents have the advantage, and we must expect that they will give us pseudo-reform like the McCain-Feingold bill.

After Watergate, Americans saw similar reforms that stopped corporate and union political contributions. These reforms worked until they were filled with loopholes. Here in Oregon, we had the prospect of good reform with

Measure 9. In 1996, Measure 9 lowered campaign spending by over 50 percent. The State High Court overturned Measure 9 on the premise of free speech. That is a farce. In the 1996 election, over \$6 billion was spent nationally for political campaigns, 80 percent of which was corporate and union contributions. The average American citizen can not afford the cost of political expression.

Money is power, and it dominates our political process. Reform will not come by way of the legislative or initiative process. Take political power back from corporations and give it to the people. For real campaign finance reform, we must amend the constitution.

Michael Olson
Political Science

Unfair taxes

Recently, the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy in Washington, D.C. released a study that shows that the total tax burden on businesses in Oregon ranks 43rd in the country, while the burden on households ranks fifth. There are only seven other states where businesses' share of the tax burden is so much lighter than that of households. There are only eight other states where households receive a smaller return in public services for each tax dollar they spend.

Things were not always like this. In 1978-9, Oregon businesses and households split the cost of funding our schools and public services almost equally. Households paid 76 percent of the in-

come taxes and businesses paid 60 percent of the property taxes. Now, businesses pay only 45 percent of the property taxes — thanks to Measure 5 — and less than 18 percent of the income taxes.

Since 1990, Oregon has become a national leader in unfair taxation! This might be more understandable if our economy were suffering, but, in fact, Oregon's economy is robust and corporate profits are soaring. There is no reason we should be agonizing over higher taxes, school closures, drastic cuts in public services, and the deterioration of our communities, while businesses continue to have their share of the total tax burden reduced. Large corporations and the wealthy need to contribute their fair share of taxes, so that Oregon can remain a good place to live and do business for all of us.

Kurt Willcox
Instructor
Labor Education
and Research Center

False concern?

The Weyerhaeuser logging corporation has developed a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for its 400,000 acres of forest land in the Upper Willamette, McKenzie, Umpqua, Siuslaw and Alsea River Basins. In this HCP, they are requesting "assurances" that they will not have to do anything more to protect threatened and endangered species on their land for the next 40-80 years. In short, they want to be exempted from the Endangered Species Act with a license to kill.

The HCP is too broad. Weyerhaeuser has not completed (or begun) an Environmental Impact Statement, which is necessary in order to understand the projected strains and impacts their actions will have on their land. It is known that they are allotting far less land than scientists say the wildlife requires to survive. Almost 100,000 acres of the HCP are within Eugene's drinking water supply, yet contamination through use of herbicides and fertilizers as well as landslides and sedimented water will continue under Weyerhaeuser's short-term 50-year harvest rotation plan.

Weyerhaeuser is an irresponsible logging company that leaves its land devastated. It is hard to believe they call this a "conservation" plan when their actions show no gleam of conservation or concern for the fish and wildlife in the forests. The HCP is designed in a way that Weyerhaeuser gets all the benefits of flexibility while the government is giving away all their regulatory authority.

We must have the humility to do something for this wildlife habitat. We are lucky enough to have the power and voice to decide our own living situations, while, in the meantime, timber corporations are deciding for the wildlife whether or not it will survive. We can ask our representatives not to support the HCP and pressure EWEB with the message that healthy forests provide clean water, and we want our water supply protected.

Robin Retherford
Eugene



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