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ELECTION NEWS

Piercy raises childcare issue

The incumbent state representative and House minority leader is running unopposed

By Jesse Sowa
Community Reporter

State Rep. Kitty Piercy said she feels better funding for schools and improved childcare standards will help improve life for Oregon citizens.

Piercy will make another bid in the upcoming election for the District 39 seat, which includes the northwest Eugene areas of River Road, Santa Clara and Bethel, as well as parts of the Whiteaker and Churchill neighborhoods.

Piercy was first elected to the Oregon House of Representatives in 1994. She is currently the House minority leader, vice chair of the House Children and Families Committee and a member of the House committees on human resources and rules and elections. She also serves on the Oregon Committee for Childcare.

Piercy said she has been a "strong voice for children and families."

"That's what I came [to the Legislature] to do," she said.

"We made strides this session in addressing several important children's issues, but there is much work yet to be done to provide for the safety and education of our children," Piercy said in her report.

During the 1995 session, Piercy was a member of the House Children and Families Committee, a member of the Ways and Means Committee on General Government and vice chair of the Special Committee on Sexual Harassment.

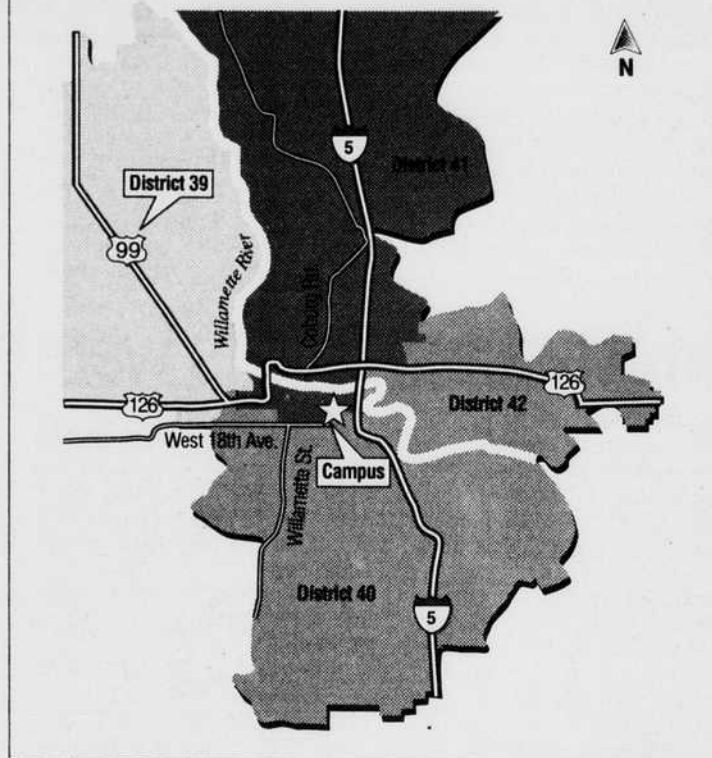
Her 1995 legislative bills focused on women's and children's health, as well as economic and disability issues.

During the 1995-96 interim period, she was also on the Oregon Commission for Childcare, the Governor's Task Force on Juvenile Crime and Prevention, the Committee on Growth Management and Revenue and the Task Force on Light Rail, where she worked on childcare issues, early prevention, runaway and homeless youth, civil rights issues and managed health care systems.

Piercy's current legislative priorities include addressing concerns dealing with jobs, health care, education, public safety, the environment and individual rights.

She said she feels workers in Oregon should be afforded a good work setting and a chance

Representative Districts: Eugene-Springfield



PAMELA SIRIANNI/Emerald

to make a good living in today's society.

"I believe there needs to be a good relationship between workers and management," she said.

During the past legislative session, a bill to protect the minimum wage in Oregon was attacked twice by those opposed to the idea. Piercy worked to save the bill and raise wages.

Piercy plans to work on improving funding for state higher education, which ranks 48th of the 50 states in the nation.

"That is pretty much of an embarrassment, I think," she said.

Piercy also hopes to improve Oregon's family childcare system. Oregon is one of six states in the country without any specific regulations relating to safety in childcare.

"We must guarantee that the 50,000 children who are in family childcare settings are safe and receive appropriate attention," Piercy said in her report. "The safety standards and training bills made it through both chambers, but a program to improve investigations remains unfunded."

The environment has been a focus of her work in the Legislature, including Eugene residents'

right to know about toxins.

Twice efforts were made to end the Toxics Right to Know charter amendment in Eugene, and it seemed likely one would pass, Piercy said. But she was able to create a compromise that could save the amendment and create a committee to develop a statewide policy.

According to the report, the compromise passed in the House, but the legislative session ended with the issue left on the agenda for the following session. No changes were made to Eugene's law.

Piercy received her bachelor's degree in elementary education from Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo, Mich., in 1964 and began teaching soon after. From 1964 to 1966, Piercy lived in Asmara, Ethiopia, as a member of the Peace Corps.

She completed her graduate studies in political science at California State University at Hayward in 1969.

Piercy has been involved in early childhood education since 1977. She taught in the preschool cooperative at Patterson Community School in Eugene from 1984 to 1996. She has also worked as a teacher at Educational Environments Inc.

Piercy has lived in the Eugene area for more than 20 years. She and her husband, David, have three children.



PIERCY

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