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Sweeney looks to unseat Wyden

The retired National Guard captain said he would propose a flat-rate income tax if elected

By Jesse Sowa
Community Reporter

Retired National Guard Capt. John Sweeney hopes to initiate several reforms should he unseat U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden in the upcoming primary election.

Sweeney said he would suggest a flat-rate income tax that he believes would allow more money to circulate through the economy.

The 10-1-1 tax reform would create a tax of 10 percent on all wages, salaries and commissions, as well as 1 percent on all other personal income, including interest, stocks and bonds. All businesses would also be taxed 1 percent on all revenues.

The reform would allow no exemptions or deductions and would be for the largest number of people, Sweeney said.

The Oregon native is also strongly in favor of creating a committee to review laws and regulations before they are en-

forced by government agencies.

Sweeney said politicians "make laws like Swiss cheese," with many ways to interpret the rules. He said the review would include all present laws and regulations as well as those to be made in the future.

Sweeney said lowering the Social Security retirement age from 65 to 60 to create a younger work force would help the United States compete with other nations. This plan would stimulate the economy, creating more jobs and allowing people who didn't have the chance before to start their own businesses.

Sweeney said he believes students in Oregon's higher education system are getting ripped off because graduate students, not professors, are teaching classes.

He also said tuition has risen sharply in the past few years, which makes him believe the system should be overhauled to make it affordable for students at all income levels.

"You're not getting what you paid for," he said. "We need a new look to this thing."

Wyden, who worked as a con-

gressman from 1981 to 1996, said he promised to work for all of the state's citizens when he ran for the Senate two years ago and has worked hard to keep his promise.

"I fought for a balanced budget, voted to make it tougher for Congress to raise your income taxes and saved taxpayers billions by cutting Medicare waste," Wyden said in a letter submitted for the 1998 Oregon Voters' Pamphlet.

"I've also made education a top priority, working to raise academic achievement and to make it easier for Oregonians to afford college."

Wyden said he has battled high-powered interest groups, such as HMOs for patients' rights and tobacco companies to keep advertising away from children.

"It hasn't always been easy — and I haven't won every fight — but by staying away from partisan bickering and focusing on things that matter, I've tried to make a difference for Oregon," he said in the letter.

Wyden was unavailable for further comment.

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