

PERSPECTIVES

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Emerald Endorsements



With the election fast approaching, the editorial board offers its take on local ballot measures

Election season poses a particular conundrum. How does one, particularly a student, balance the demands of everyday life with the desire to be a responsible citizen who participates in the political process?

These endorsements represent an effort to bring some order to the deluge of information that grows ever thicker as Nov. 3 draws closer.

We hope that those of you who choose to vote will investigate the issues for yourself and then make informed decisions.

Measure 20-02, Library Operations Levy: Yes.

Many of us are familiar with the inadequacies of Eugene's library facilities, either from firsthand experience

or because what we've heard second-hand has kept us away. In June, the City Council approved funding to build a new downtown library.

Measure 20-02 would provide the funds to operate this library as well as two branch libraries. The money could also be used to pay for extended operating hours, more materials and enhanced Internet access.

Furthermore, the branch libraries will allow more better access to library facilities. All of these improvements are long overdue, and the boon they would provide to the city overwhelms the expense involved

Measure 20-03, Parks and open spaces: No.

The importance of parks in a community is apparent, particularly in a community such as Eugene. It is not the intent of this measure that is in dispute but rather its substance.

Measure 20-03 contains provisions not only for providing new public parks, but also for building new ath-

letic fields. Other cities faced with the need to build new fields have managed to find money from private sources. There's no reason Eugene can't do the same and save the taxpayers a few bucks.

Measure 20-04, American Flag on Skinner Butte: Yes.

Last year's extensive debate over the memorial cross atop Skinner Butte and its subsequent removal centered mainly on separation of church and state. Measure 20-04 proposes to dedicate Skinner Butte park as a memorial to U.S. veterans marked by a large American flag.

While we are loath to agree with the Voter's Pamphlet Committee in Support of Measure 20-04's assertion that the American flag is an "all-inclusive" symbol, it seems that the best argument in favor of this proposal is the lack of compelling argument against it.

Ultimately, 20-04 is a gesture and not one that will substantially impact

the quality of life of the majority of the citizenry. If veterans and other proponents of this measure feel that it does in fact honor those who have fought and died, that should outweigh the weak aesthetic and philosophical objections against the flag.

Measure 20-99, Establish Citizen Review Board of Police Actions: Split Opinion.

After much deliberation, the editorial board was unable to reach a consensus on this measure. One argument holds that establishing a citizen review board will create an unnecessary layer of bureaucracy with the additional detriment of undermining the police in the eyes of the community. The opposing viewpoint maintains that if Eugene truly wants to create a community policing model, then citizen participation on this level is imperative.

This editorial represents the opinions of the Emerald editorial board. Responses may be sent to ode@oregon.uoregon.edu.

Letters to the Editor

Thank you, OSPiRG

This new opportunity for students to lower their interest rates on their loans is great (ODE, Oct. 21). After finding out more about it, it also seems to me like proof as to why we need to re-establish OSPiRG. OSPiRG is one of the key groups, along with the ASUO, that won this lower interest rate for students. The main reason OSPiRG was successful was because they had the resources to have a professional higher education specialist up in Washington, D.C., making the case for a lower interest rate to the media and policy makers.

It's amazing that OSPiRG pulled it off even though the loan industry had dozens of lobbyist working to raise interest rates. Sallie Mae, one of the largest loan companies, spent more

than \$1 million in just six months on lobbying to raise the interest rates on student loans.

I'm going to save \$1,000 because of OSPiRG's efforts. I think it's worth a couple of bucks a term to have someone making sure that my interests concerning the loan industry are told in Washington. I've decided to encourage my fellow students to do the same.

Devon Streed
Political Science

Impartial standard needed

Although I am hardly a proponent of the SATs as currently structured, I still disagree profoundly with your editorial on college admission (ODE, Oct. 20). There are, I feel, two flaws in your argument.

One concerns the SATs themselves. While standardized exams, as currently designed, are racist, classist and only vaguely useful, the principle of a standardized test is still valuable. Without some standardized measure that puts all high schoolers on an equal field, we unfairly reward students for attending programs where grades were universally higher, fellow students performed abnormally poorly or certain programs were uniquely available.

The second flaw is the notion that a broad examination of student activities represents the most useful measure of an applicant's potential as a student. While it is true that students should be involved in many activities, most schools take this into account (both as a reason a student might have

lower grades and an admirable trait if student grades are in fact high). Further weighting extracurricular activities would be dishonest. College is about the ability to take a "grueling test," perform well in the classroom, and most of all, grasp a range of academic materials.

Outside activities are admirable and necessary for the maintenance of sanity, and universities should encourage them in applicants and students alike. However, admissions boards should never lose track of the fact that the application process is designed to find those who will best participate in the most fundamental mission of an institution: the acquisition of knowledge through the classroom.

Mike Schmierbach
Madison, Wis.

Thumbs



TO THE U.S. SENATE:

For rejecting a bill that would require universities to issue debit cards to students. The bill was supported by businesses who wanted to make it more more tempting for students to spend money off campus.

TO HONESTY:

A 5-year-old New York boy turned his father into police after he attempted to break into a car. And they say kids don't have any morals these days.



TO OVER-REACTING:

An Oklahoma City judge sentenced a man to two days in jail for playing with a yo-yo in court. Good thing he didn't try to walk the dog, or he might be in solitary.

TO PARANOIA:

A 15-year-old girl from Baltimore was suspended from school after being accused of casting a spell on another student. Gee, we hope witchcraft doesn't look too bad on your permanent record.