

Candidates focus on tuition cost

Three U.S. Senate contenders have different ideas on how to lower the price of education

By David Ryan
Oregon Daily Emerald

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, his Republican challenger John Lim and Pacific Party U.S. Senate candidate Karyn Moskowitz share plans to lower the cost of college tuition.

But after Lim and Moskowitz's promises and after Wyden's record of fighting for student grants and loans in Washington, D.C., the candidates' ideas start heading different directions.

Lim said he wants more federal grants and student loans made available to college students. He wants to ease the cost of tuition. As an indicator of how expensive college tuition is, he points to the Consumer Price Index, which measures the cost of living.

"Since 1980, tuition went up 300 percent while the Consumer Price Index went up 100 percent," he said.

Lim said he is worried that students who may want to go to college are kept out because of the cost of tuition. To help students out, he wants to increase the amount of money parents can place in educational IRAs.

Moskowitz said she supports federal grants to college campuses and higher education in general.

"I'm very highly educated," she said. "Of course I support higher ed."

Moskowitz also said she wants students to be able to write off the interest due on their students loans.

"It instills us with fear," she said, "the fear of not having a high-paying enough job to pay our loans back."

Moskowitz said with smaller post-graduate debts more students would be able to work for social service organizations.

Wyden said he has supported scholarships and loans, some of which passed in the 1997 federal budget. He also helped to pass the Hope Scholarship Program, a tax credit available to students paying for tuition.

But that ends the similarities between Wyden, Lim and Moskowitz. When the issue of what they plan to do beyond grants and loans comes up, the candidates start speculating differently.

Wyden said he is working with Republican U.S. Sen. Gordon Smith (R) on the issue of higher education.

"We've been talking about our ideas to lower college tuition," he said. The cost of living has increased disproportionately to the cost of living, he said.

Wyden said he and Smith have been talking to higher education officials around the state, including University President Dave Frohnmayer.

Lim said he is opposed to federal mandates that might change the management of college administrations because of his beliefs about the function of the federal government.

"The U.S. government shouldn't micro-manage," he said.

Instead of micro-managing, Lim wants government to use scholarship incentives to lure high school seniors into careers in high technology.

"We should support students to develop their own talent, especially in high technology so we don't have to import high technology workers," he said. "To me, in our country, we need to have more engineers and technicians."

Higher education is key to the nation's competitive economic health, Lim said.

"Without the proper investment in higher education, our country will not survive," he said.

Moskowitz expressed concerns about corporate donations to Universities, saying the University of Washington did not use the new private money to replace state funds in certain programs.

"The environmental management program at Washington was demolished after state funding was reduced," she said.

Corporate funding rushed and filled the void in funds, she said, but the environmental management program was not reinstated.

David Ryan covers the Eugene City Council, community groups and politics for the Emerald.



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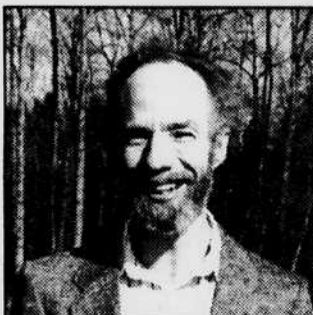
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