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PERSPECTIVES

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Get involved in your education:

Students need to rely on their numbers if they want to change legislation that affects them

With the lurid details of the Starr report and the subsequent impeachment, voters are feeling more removed from the government than ever before. Alienation is apparent when we consider that only 37 percent of voters actually turned out for last year's non-presidential election.

On the other hand, we jump at the chance to claim freedom of speech whenever we feel that our First Amendment rights have been violated, yet when it comes to the very democratic process that the freedom of speech was designed to protect, we miss the mark completely.

But it is not just about voting, it's about getting involved to make changes in the government and the Legislature. We have heard almost every student whine and complain about an increase in fees or tuition, yet what are students doing about it?

This is not a guilt trip. It is an opportunity to become active in legislation that affects us as students. We need to get involved. The ASUO is sponsoring a Campaign Kick-off today in 207 Chapman Hall at 5 p.m. to discuss a plan of action in the upcoming Legislature.

This gives students an opportunity to come together and represent their needs.

Do we want a tuition freeze? Then do something about it. The Legislature will review the Oregon University System biennial budget model in the next six months.

While spending on higher education has gone down in recent years, tuition has gone up.

It is time for students to fight back and claim budget dollars for themselves. If we do not stand up for ourselves, who will?

We don't have money to pay for campaigns, television ads or professional lobbyists to secure our cause. Our power lies in our numbers and our ability to come together as a cohesive student body.

Another issue facing students and especially student parents is the Oregon Student Child Care Block Grant. This federally funded program ensures that student parents can go to school without worrying about how they will pay their child care bills. Yet only 250 families are on the program now and 940 are on the waiting list. Those are

940 families that may never know the benefits of an education if the state doesn't do something about it.

To change legislation, students need to stick together and represent each other to the government.

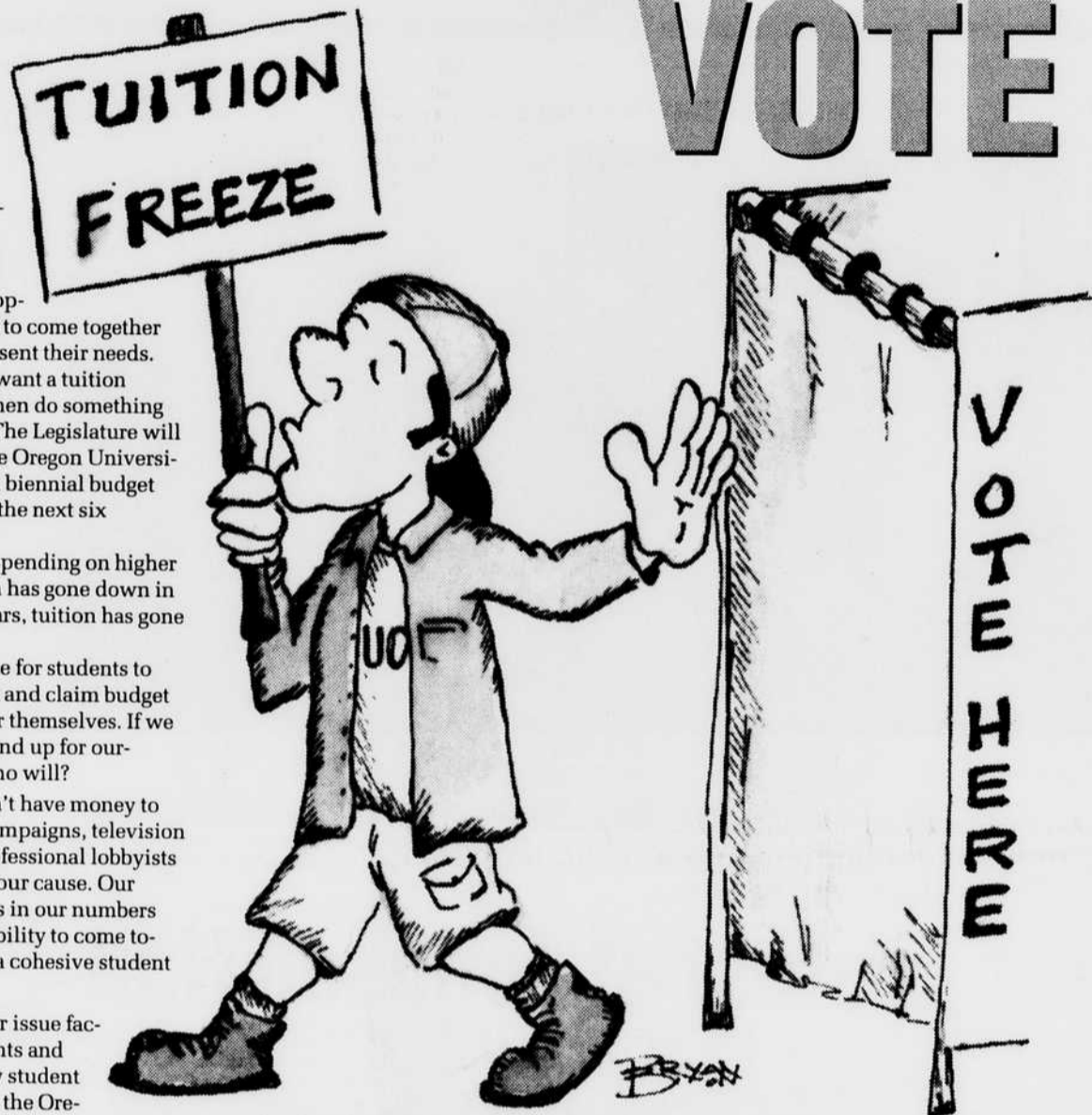
These are our rights. It may not be as glamorous as the

First Amendment or as alluring as some of the other personal freedoms that we cling to, but we have a right to be part of the democratic process, and if we don't exercise that right, all the others are pointless.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed

citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." — Margaret Mead (taken from the ASUO Kickoff Poster)

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



Letters to the Editor

Environmental Racism

This weekend the students and community members of the University have a rare opportunity to participate in a conference unlike any other in the country. The Coalition Against Environmental Racism (CAER), an ASUO student program, is hosting the 5th annual Environmental Justice Conference. This conference is funded with student incidental fees and will bring to campus an incredible group of nationally recognized environmental justice activists.

Topics include urban environmental justice, cross border issues, international indigenous sovereignty, community organizing, Environmental Protection Agency, racism and the environmental movement, white privilege, Title IV, Native Americans and women and environmental justice and networking and coalition building.

The Environmental Justice Conference is free to the public and begins Friday at 7 p.m.

at the University Law School. For more information please contact Suite 1, EMU at 346-4073. Take advantage of this great educational opportunity.

Ronnie Seawood
Undeclared

Construction War

We, the residents of Young Hall, would like to tell the world another side of the construction that is going on at Esslinger. Imagine. Put yourselves in our beds. We are dreaming peacefully and then around 7 a.m. every morning, weekdays and weekends, boom. Bulldozers, saws, trucks, hammering, shouting. You roll over in your bed but there is no escape. Pillows over ears, nothing helps. We are a peaceful people. We generally get along and are friendly but a huge chasm exists in all of our friendships.

For over here it is the light sleepers against the heavy sleeper. Write an expose, get the inside scoop on our loud mornings.

This is not a threat, but we can't take it anymore. If you don't heed us, you may find students in pajamas handcuffing themselves to the welding, martyrs for the cause. The University prides itself on being a college of reason, a place where students' concerns are taken seriously.

We, at Young Hall, are mostly transfer students — the majority of us are upper classmen who will not be living here next year to reap the rewards of our sleepless mornings. We implore the University to do something. If nothing is done by next week, we will resort to guerrilla warfare tactics. They will find toothbrushes in their machinery gears. Students donning shower caps and bathrobes to conceal their identity will storm the perimeters of Esslinger's construction zone. Your hardhats will not protect you. Beware. We can strike at any time, we are always awake.

Kyra Wolfe
National Student Exchange

CORRECTION

The Jan. 20 story "New book gives advice to roommates" should have said that Lori Stephens lived in the Janet Smith Co-op.

The caption for the photo that went with the story "Police substation helps to decrease crime" should have cited Bev Mason as the Eugene Police community service specialist. The Emerald regrets the errors.

SAID & DONE

"The promise of our future is limitless. But we cannot realize that promise if we allow the hum of our prosperity to lull us into complacency."

President Clinton talks about the future of our nation in his State of the Union Address.

"No matter what the outcome of the president's situation, life in America will go on, our lives will continue to be filled with practical matters and not constitutional ones."

Rep. Jennifer Dunn in the Republican's response to President Clinton's State of the Union Address.

"The School of Journalism and Communication at the University of Oregon in Eugene gives students the opportunity for high quality education while enjoying a wonderful quality of life. If you want quality when you wake up, turn to CBS and you'll find there's more to This Morning."

Tim Gleason, dean of the journalism school, recites before a camera crew his sound bite for a promo of the CBS morning show

"It's the only time the country even talks about civil rights and social and economic justice."

John Foster at a Martin Luther King Jr. remembrance gathering at South Eugene High School Monday night