

PERSPECTIVES

Education solutions

Legislators should use the tax kicker and a corporate tax to invest in K-12 education

Everyone is trying to make a quick buck these days. And a little thing called instant gratification has become the nation's new mantra.

The pace of life moves faster and faster, and we have things like drive-through coffee houses, banks, liquor stores (however much sense that makes) and pharmacies. As Americans, we want what we want when we want it: two minutes later is four minutes too late.

In this consumer driven world it is easy to understand why people have little time to devote more than precious seconds to being informed and making good legislative decisions. This is especially true for bills that promise immediate cuts at the expense of long-term public good.

Examples of this can be seen in the infamous voter-approved 1990 ballot Measure 5 and the subsequent 1996 Measure 47 that effectively cut property taxes and left schools without much-needed funding.

The ability to delay gratification is in fact a sign of intelligence, and voters don't seem to be displaying much of it.

Now it is time for Oregon legislators and businesses to prove theirs.

A current debate among legislators, businesses and the governor focuses on how much money should be given to K-12 education and where it will come from. Gov. John Kitzhaber has proposed \$4.9 million to fund K-12 that would include using the tax kicker and a 1 percent business tax. Some legislators are opposed to using the kicker and businesses are opposed to the tax.

Now, wait, this is one of those delayed vs. instant gratification things. Measures 5 and 47 have drained funding for education and

this is a chance to undo some of the damage. Or do we simply ignore our long-term goals of raising an educated society and opt for a small tax kicker, which could buy us dinner for one at McDonalds?

It is one of those intelligence questions now. Businesses should also question the intelligence of rallying against a 1 percent tax that would fund educating their future work force. Instant. Delayed. Businesses need to think of the long term.

Everyone agrees that the benefits of education far outweigh the cost, but when it comes to funding everyone wants to pass the buck. It is what in economics is called a public good; one that benefits everyone.

The other phenomenon in economics is called the free-rider problem, which states that every-

one will underestimate their need for this service in order to get out of paying for it. Therefore legislators and the governor need to take this into consideration when lobbyists try to dissuade them from spending on education.

Legislators should show their intelligence and fight off those who would rather indulge in the instant gratification of a tax kicker. They should invest in the long term with more spending on education through the 1 percent tax and a reinvestment of the kicker. Such a wise investment will pay huge dividends in the future.

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

QUOTED

The foreign film maker Roberto Benigni won two Oscars for his film "Life is Beautiful." In his acceptance speeches at the 71st Oscars on March 21, Benigni exuded a playfulness and character that charmed all who listened. These are a few samples of what he had to say.

Benigni on winning: "I am not able to express all my gratitude, because now, my body is in tumult because it is a colossal moment of joy ... I would like to be Jupiter and kidnap everybody and lie down making love to everybody."

Benigni on family values: "I would like to thank my parents in Vergaio in the little village in Italy. They gave me the biggest gift — the poverty."

Benigni on Sophia Loren: "I want to be rocked by the waves of your beauty."

Benigni on joy: "I want to kiss everybody ... Here you kisses the joy as it flies — leaves an eternity sunrise — the said poet ... I feel like ... to dive in this ocean of generosity."



Letters to the Editor

Tragic misunderstandings

I, for one, had a hard time discerning exactly what Chad Wright meant to say in his letter to the editor entitled "Greek Tragedy" (ODE, March 11). Somewhere in the jumble of incoherent sentences that I can only assume were an attempt at deep thinking and poetic phrases I got the impression that Chad had a very negative opinion of the greek system.

I commend him for at least giving the fraternity a try first. Most people who make fun of the greek system have never joined and basically have no idea what goes on in that scene.

I think that Chad was being hypocritical in his criticisms. He generalizes the greek system by calling it a "hopeless and degrading body," yet at the beginning of the letter he stated "understand that many of us, in may different fraternities and sororities, do not like the label we have received from the

minority."

It sounds like he has no problem stereotyping, or having other people stereotype the same group of people of which he was once a member.

Obviously the event that occurred before Chad got on the bus left a strong enough impression to provoke such an angry response. I don't believe that one bad experience should ruin your entire perception of something, and I don't think stereotyping or being hypocritical accomplishes anything.

Maybe Chad is the one who needs to "leave high school by the wayside" and do some much-needed growing up of his own.

Chelsea Harlan
Undeclared

Transferred blame

In the thumbs down column (ODE, March 8), I noticed that you gave a thumbs down to Capt. Richard Ashby's acquittal be-

cause of lack of accountability.

Let me pose this question to you. Do you think he sleeps well enough at night knowing that he accidentally killed those people? Ashby expresses his remorse over the event and will continue to do so over his lifetime. The problem was that this event, however unfortunate, was an accident.

This Marine puts his life on the line for his country every time he gets into his aircraft and all you want is someone to pin the blame on.

There were a multitude of things that went wrong that day last year. Ashby was doing his job: training for that day when he would have to defend his country. That sounds like accountability to me; willing to die for the country and people he protects.

Unfortunately when something does go wrong, he is no longer respected among the people he defends but looked down upon because he was doing his job.

Look at what he did after the accident. He

brought his crippled jet home and saved the lives of his crew, which means four other people did not die because of his actions.

He took responsibility for his actions and did not hide from the fact that his aircraft caused that accident, and still you look down upon him. Next time you see a man or woman in uniform think about the countless others who have died in combat and training to preserve your freedom.

Patrick C. Fields
Political Science

LETTERS POLICY

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