

PERSPECTIVES

Under the cap

Salary limits could send new teachers packing

OK, students, creative visualization time. Imagine that you're just about ready to bolt out of the graduation gate. Suppose you got lucky and are about to head into the post-academic fray with a degree in a major that is not only personally fulfilling but also in high demand. You're feeling pretty good about life right now, aren't you? Good. Hold on to that; it will be important later.

There are few noble professions left in this weary world, and few would deny that teaching is one of them. It's also undeniable that teachers get jerked around in a way that few other professionals do. And like the rain, it just keeps on coming.

Earlier this week, state Sens. Gene Derfler and Neil Bryant introduced a proposal that would allow individual school districts to place a cap on teacher salaries and benefits.

Just the phrase "salary cap" calls up images of overindulged professional athletes quibbling with their equally bloated management over that extra million dollars. This is hardly the case with Oregon teachers, whose salaries average about \$42,301. Sure, this places them among the nation's top 20 with regard to pay, but it's not as though they're in the league with Michael Jordan or Albert Bell.

Just last week, the University's School of Education was ranked 16th in the country by U.S. News and World Report. For years prior, the program has earned other accolades from a variety of sources both statewide and nationwide. It seems the school is amply prepared to meet one of its primary goals: to produce top-notch teachers.

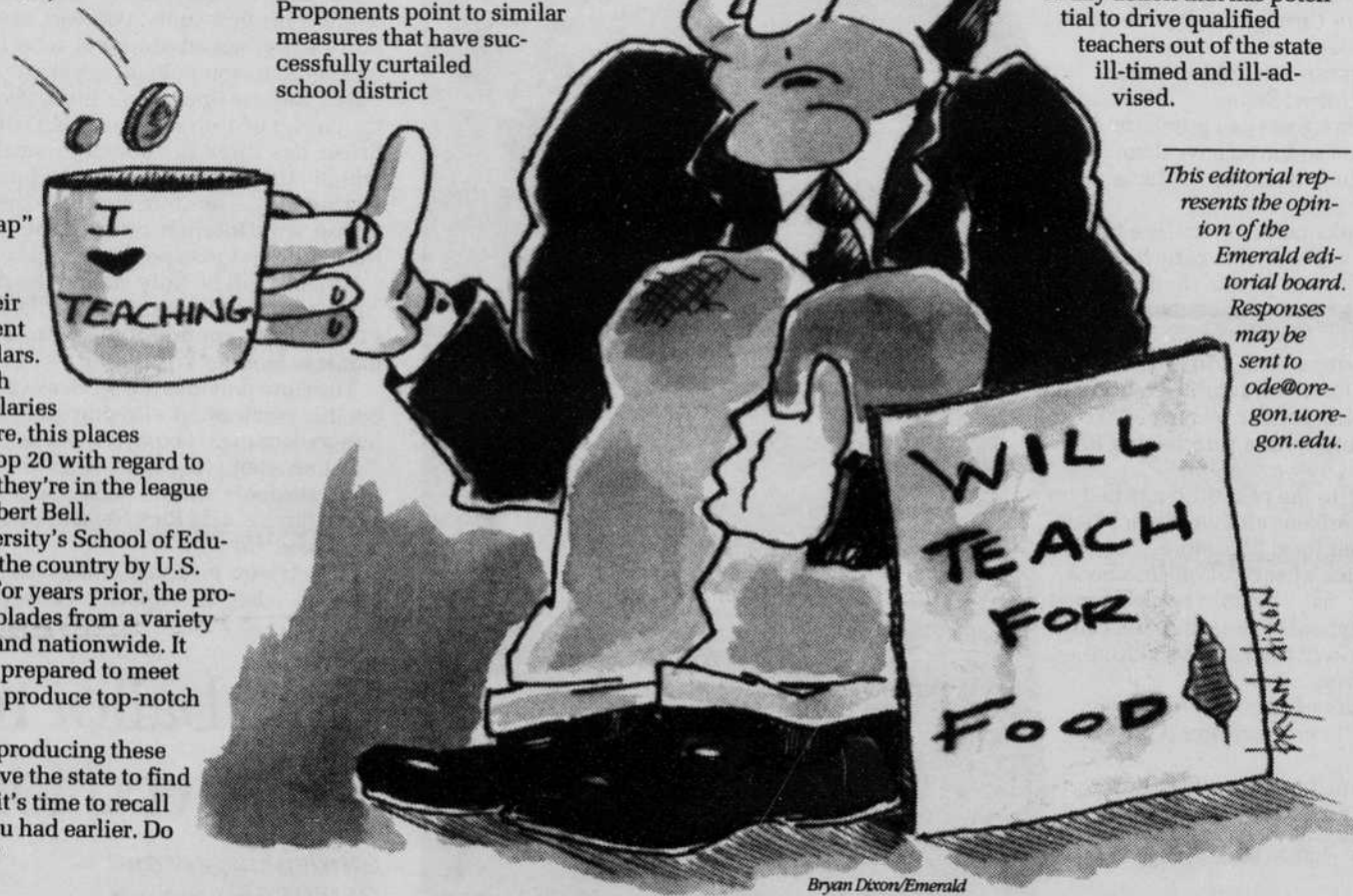
What good can come of producing these teachers if they need to leave the state to find a competitive wage? Now it's time to recall that warm fuzzy feeling you had earlier. Do you feel it fading just a bit?

If this bill passes, instead of saving money, it would only serve to disenchant Oregon's current and prospective teachers. Those fresh out of education programs such as the University's, those with their options wide open, might see a salary cap as a cap on their growth potential and choose to take their skills out of state.

The bill's sponsors argue that this is a way to manage the largest single cost school districts face — teacher salaries. Proponents point to similar measures that have successfully curtailed school district

spending in Wisconsin and Washington.

Teachers in those states say that the cap has intensified tension between districts and teachers' unions. The Oregon Education Association has already voiced its opposition to the bill. As the largest teachers' union in Oregon, the OEA worries that a salary cap will seriously damage its ability to bargain with school districts. With the state in the midst of a teacher shortage, the Oregon Legislature should consider any action that has potential to drive qualified teachers out of the state ill-timed and ill-advised.



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

Thumbs



THUMBS UP
To giving a second look:
As the National Geography Bee approaches, The Oregonian reports that schools are putting new emphasis on the oft-neglected study of what goes where.

To charity:
Standing behind their commitment to the region, several NATO countries are opening their borders to Kosovo refugees.



THUMBS DOWN
To irony:
The U.S. barge Alaska is grounded near the entrance to Young's Bay. It is owned by Crowley Marine Services, the same company that helped free the New Carissa.

Letters to the Editor

Condoning sexism?

When will it end? When will the Emerald realize that permitting sexism is promoting sexism? On April 2, 1999, the Emerald printed an appalling column of one man's version of a good vacation. The overtly sexist, rape-oriented, violence-condoning, ODE-degrading language within the column is a serious problem. I understand that the views of this column "do not necessarily represent those of the paper" and as a social justice activist, I fully understand the implications of the First Amendment. However, there are ethical standards in journalism to which the Emerald should hold itself accountable. This sexist writing is neither permitted nor published in The Student Insurgent, The Register-Guard, The New York Times or other reputable newspapers. To permit it is to promote. Discrimination is discrimination. No one has any right to discriminate against women, against anyone.

W. Douglas Serrill
The Survival Center

Not so sweet

I'm responding to the column "Short and Sweet" by Vince Madeiros (ODE, Apr. 2). Mr. Madeiros describes the wonderful vacation that he had during last spring break. What's wrong with what he reveals? Plenty! Vince Madeiros depicts the joys he and his friend had purchasing women for sex in Mexico and Las Vegas. Viewing women as a mere commodity — to just use and discard — is aberrant to me. Prostitution is not a victimless crime; the prostitute is degraded in the process. Our society will never be a really loving one until we stop objectifying others. The Perspectives page will be better served by a life-affirming approach than to drag us all down to the trash heap of humanity.

Ron Seymour
Eugene

Vivisection unnecessary

Vivisection should no longer be tolerated on the University campus because it has no

validity and is highly unethical. There are ways of obtaining the same desired information without experimenting on animals.

This university allows scientists to experiment on various animals including Rhesus monkeys, rabbits, owls, rats, mice, zebra fish, lizards and frogs. For example, psychology professor Richard Marrocco studies the attention abilities of Rhesus monkeys on certain drugs. Marrocco permanently implants surgical steel caps into the monkeys' scalps and a coil of wire into their eyes. During the experiment the monkeys are screwed into a "primate chair" by their steel-cap implants so they cannot move their heads.

Instead of causing these animals great pain and suffering, the University should promote alternatives to vivisection. Scientists could analyze tissue and cell cultures taken from human volunteers, biopsies and post-mortem specimens. Noninvasive imaging techniques, such as cat scans and MRI, can also reveal how the human body works and can monitor the progress of disease and response to therapy.

We need to realize that we cannot take information gathered from one species and expect it to help another. Animals vary in response to drugs. For example, penicillin has saved countless human lives but is fatal to guinea pigs. Many people have died from drugs released to the public after they were safety tested on animals.

It is time to end this fraudulent research. Educate yourself and realize how inefficient, unethical and what a waste of money vivisection is.

Melissa White
Journalism

LETTERS POLICY

The Oregon Daily Emerald will attempt to print all letters containing comments on topics of interest to the University community. Letters must be limited to 250 words. The Emerald reserves the right to edit any letter for length, clarity, grammar, style and libel. Letters may be dropped off at EMU Suite 300.