

# Property tax could rescue schools' funding

■ While the 4J district hopes to maintain programs, the Bethel district needs to build more classrooms

By Josh Ryneal  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Eugene schools, still feeling the pinch from the passage of 1994 state Ballot Measure 5, are seeking to regain lost tax revenue by sponsoring two school funding measures on the May 16 ballot.

The 4J school district, facing \$5 million in budget cuts next year, is presenting Measure 20-28, a proposed tax levy that supporters say would only increase property taxes by a small amount, while keeping school funding at its current level.

The Bethel district, one of the fastest growing school districts in the state, is sponsoring Measure 20-33 to build two new schools and alleviate overcrowding.

Neither measure had any state-

ments of opposition in the Oregon Voter's Pamphlet.

Schools in the 4J district, facing increasing operating costs and decreased funding, hope to pass Measure 20-28 to help maintain their current levels of staff and programs.

If the measure doesn't pass, the district will face losing 46 full-time teaching positions, middle school athletics programs and \$1.1 million in administrative and support positions.

Measure 20-28 would cost property owners an average 71 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value.

Kelly McIver, communications director for the 4J district, said state legislative funding has not kept up with the increasing costs of running the district.

"We are still facing extensive cuts from Measure 5, and we have never been able to get back up to the origi-

nal service we provided before it passed," he said.

The Bethel district, in northwest Eugene, has schools filling up so rapidly that there is currently only one free classroom.

"This is a part of Eugene that is growing very quickly," Sen. Susan Castillo, D-Eugene, said.

The Bethel district, Castillo said, can't keep up with the approximately 100 new students each year.

"Classes are overcrowded, and we really need some extra funding to construct two new school buildings and keep up maintenance on the ones we already have," she said.

If the measure passes, the district will construct an 800-student elementary and middle school building and a 200-student alternative high school. It will also expand on existing school buildings.

Craig Hawkins, Bethel district communications coordinator, said the biggest hurdle is the voter turnout law passed by the Oregon legislature in 1997.



## Ballot Measures 20-28, 20-33

**Eugene Ballot Measure 20-28** would authorize a local option serial tax levy that would be used to maintain current levels of funding in the 4J school district. The money raised would prevent cuts of current programs and staff and would cost taxpayers 71 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value.

**Supporters say that Measure 20-28** would allow schools to stop any further cuts to programs and staff while only slightly increasing the property taxes of residents in the district. While only a temporary measure, it would provide \$5 million a year in badly needed funding.

**Eugene Ballot Measure 20-33** requires a 50 percent voter turnout to count, and authorizes a \$27.5 million bond measure that would be used to build two new schools in the Bethel school district and expand current school buildings.

**Supporters say that if Measure 20-33** passes, the overcrowding of Bethel schools would be alleviated, while bonded debt would actually go down. Badly needed facilities and expansions can be built to serve a rapidly growing school district.

There is no known opposition to either measure.

SOURCE: Voter's Pamphlet

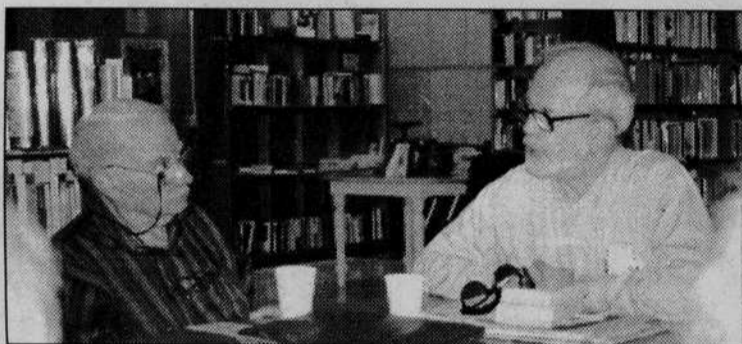
"We need 50 percent voter turnout to get the measure passed," Hawkins said, "so even if it gains a majority of the vote, it still may not pass."

Supporters of the measure will

organize grassroots efforts to increase awareness and get people to go to the polls.

If the measure doesn't pass, supporters plan to resubmit it to the November ballot.

# Socialist presidential hopeful has unorthodox views



David McReynold (right), the Socialist Party U.S.A. candidate for president, made a campaign stop Tuesday evening at Tsunami Books in south Eugene.

■ The openly gay, draft card-burning, marijuana-smoking candidate wants to broaden the issues in the 2000 election

By Andrew Adams  
Oregon Daily Emerald

Appearing before a dozen members of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Alliance, David

McReynolds, the Socialist Party U.S.A. candidate for president, admitted his chances of winning the election are not good.

But just being in the race,

McReynolds said, allows him the opportunity to address issues that he believes are worthy of the national spotlight but are neglected by major candidates.

The 70-year-old New York City resident is not only an outsider because of his socialistic views on government, society and the economy. McReynolds is the first openly gay candidate who is also open about his past resistance to the military draft and his use of marijuana, which he supports legalizing.

Tuesday's visit to the LGBTQA office was just one stop on McReynolds' tour of Oregon. He will make several more stops Wednesday in Eugene before leaving for Ashland.

Mary Bankhead, LGBTQA member and a sophomore majoring in English, said McReynolds' supporters came to the alliance and asked if the candidate could speak

with members. Because McReynolds is a strong supporter of gay rights, Bankhead said the group was interested in what he had to say, but is "always interested in learning about candidates and national issues."

McReynolds said he hoped his national exposure in the race will make people start to see socialism as a viable alternative to capitalism, even though many people view his ideas as radical. However, the core of his message includes more conventional goals, including universal health care coverage, reduced military spending and more personal freedom, he said.

McReynolds' platform includes universal health coverage and a managed health care system in

which hospitals are non-profit. He said the Democratic candidate Al Gore and the Republican hopeful George W. Bush have addressed the issue but are not as eager as he is to change the current system.

He also wants to cut the current military budget by half, abolish the Central Intelligence Agency, eliminate nuclear arsenals and reduce the number of prisons.

"This country has the highest prison population in the world," he said. "There is a corporate drive to put people into prison."

Oregon's Socialist party has a strong voice despite its small size, said Eugene resident Karl Scog, a retired lawyer and current treasurer for the Oregon State Socialist party. He said the Lane County chapter of the party has about 220 members and is active despite "many people being afraid of the S-word."



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