

Measure 95 defines teacher job performance

■ While some say Ballot Measure 95 would hurt schools, others argue that it would improve teaching

Lindsay Buchele
Oregon Daily Emerald

Ballot Measure 95, designed to base teachers' salaries on the performance of their students, will potentially threaten job security and create competition between teachers, Oregon Parent Teacher Association President Kathryn Firestone said. Proponents, however, argue that such accountability will improve the quality of teaching in Oregon's public schools.

Supported by Bill Sizemore of Oregon Taxpayers United, Measure 95 will require student learning, not a teacher's seniority or education level, to determine their

pay.

Oregon currently has the "Fair Dismissal Law," designed to protect teachers from being unfairly fired. Seniority plays no part in a teacher's employability, said Ted Heid, head of the Human Resource Department for the Eugene School District.

Supporters of the measure argue that seniority does exist and is keeping unqualified teachers employed. They suggest that teacher's unions are working to keep teachers employed through seniority so the unions have more power.

"From the moment teacher's unions have been in existence, they have been focused on keeping teachers employed because of seniority," said Becky Miller, the measure's sponsor and an Oregon Taxpayers United employee. "Since then, student learning has gone down."

The measure does not specify

how students' learning will be measured. In fact, such details have been purposely left out of the measure so that each school district can determine its own form of measurement, Miller said.

Bob Bruce, of the Oregon University System's Chancellors office, said that the proposed legislation would have no bearing on higher education, as the language of the ballot speaks to public schools.

"Professors at the university are on merit-based pay anyway, so it wouldn't affect them," he said.

It is assumed that student performance will be tested through standardized tests given at the beginning and the end of the school year, Firestone said, though the accuracy of the tests in determining student learning is debatable.

"Standardized testing is not a reasonable evaluation," Firestone said.

Miller also argues schools will end up with the best teachers, thanks to the results of the student evaluations.

Firestone disagrees, saying that if teachers are fired because of their student's performances, they will start to compete with other teachers for honors classes.

"Teachers will only want to teach the AP [Advanced Placement] and honors level classes so that their students do well," Firestone said.

Miller said that rather than competing for jobs, teachers will be more likely to request better materials and resources to help students learn better.

Both sides said parents should play an active part in the process, whether or not the measure passes.

Registration

continued from page 1

don't want to let other people decide students' futures."

Kevin Iervolino, a senior sociology major and registered voter, added that students who don't vote shouldn't be surprised if candidates and legislators don't pay much attention to student issues in the elections.

"People complain that the candidates don't address our issues," he said. "But they don't have the right to complain if they're not voting, because they aren't swaying the election."

For the past few weeks, the legislative team has been reaching out to students by visiting student-populated areas such as the University Commons, greek houses, residence halls, and the west University neighborhood. The ASUO has also talked to representatives from the Guinness Book of World Records, and is planning to set the record for the world's largest ballot box to draw students to vote. The box, which will be built by the Carpenter's Union, will be 21 feet tall with a 7- to 8-foot base.

On Friday, the University had about 4,700 registered voters, making it first in the nation in terms of total number of students registered to vote. State Affairs Coordinator Brian Tanner said this year's campaign has been one of the most successful ones in recent history.

This year, the Oregon election will be held exclusively by mail. Students who are already registered in Oregon can update their address and other information up to election day, but Tanner said students should make their changes by Tuesday as well. Tanner said students may not receive ballots in time to vote if they wait too long to change their information.

For the next three weeks, the legislative team will focus its efforts on educating voters, and will give presentations about seven ballot measures — 7, 8, 9, 88, 91, 93 and 98 — which deal with financial funding and directly impact students. Tanner said that although many of the election issues don't seem to apply to students now, they will be important in the long run.

"Since we're usually the youngest, we have to live with the election re-

Jackson

continued from page 1

"It was just good timing," Tanner said. "It just landed in our laps as of [Sunday] morning."

Jackson planned to be in the northwest already, but Tanner said he wasn't sure what happened for Jackson to come to campus on such short notice. He said he'd like to think he's coming because of the number of student voters the ASUO has registered this fall.

sults the longest," Tanner said. "Right now people over the age of 60 with a high school education are more likely to vote than a college student. But at some point, our generation will be running the country, and by the time we get there we don't want to have our hands tied by previous generations... We want candidates to realize that our needs need to be addressed for the future because we are the future."



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