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Oregon Daily Emerald

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Oregon Daily Emerald

Politicians run the gamut

■ Three novice candidates speak on crime, education, health care and taxes

By Lindsay Buchele
Daily Emerald

Three newcomers to Oregon politics are running for the state representative seat for District 40.

One is a Democrat who hopes to better fund education; another is a Republican who stresses the need to improve the Oregon Health Plan; and the third is a Socialist who wants to "level the playing field" by taxing the rich at a higher rate.

All about education
Democratic candidate Phil Barnhart became concerned about Oregon's educational future when several tax-cut measures passed in the early 1990s. A practicing psychologist, Barnhart said he worried about how the measures caused the lay-off of more than 100 teachers in the 4J School District.



BARNHART

which had a major impact on the Eugene School District," Barnhart said. "I became very frustrated with this." To make a difference in school funding, Barnhart ran for and was elected to the Eugene School Board in 1994, and he began lobbying state legislatures on behalf of the district.

"I found that when I was lobbying in Salem, it was the Democrats who were more supportive and the Republicans who were more skeptical about why we couldn't fund our own program," Barnhart said.

As a result, Barnhart said he became active in the Democratic Party, and is now chairman of the Democratic Party of Lane County.

As for health care, Barnhart said he wants to make the Oregon Health Plan more available to students. Full-time students generally do not qualify because although their income level is low enough, they often don't hold jobs, which is one of the requirements of the plan.

Improving Oregon's health
Republican candidate Bill Young, who decided to run for office after his friends and neighbors waged a write-in campaign, said his background in community service best qualifies him for the job.

"I have the ability to represent everyone in the district," Young said. "I've been a veterinarian in this district for 30 years, and I've had my home in this district for 30 years."



YOUNG

at the qualifications and give the providers the ability to say what does and doesn't qualify people for the plan, we could eliminate those abusing the system."

Young said another issue that needs to be addressed is public safety. He said he would support investing

money into a rehabilitation program to prevent first-time offenders from committing crimes again.

"There were 1,100 criminals who were repeat offenders last year and were arrested as many as 10 times in one year," Young said. "Our police officers are wasting manpower by having to arrest the same criminals over and over again."

Leaning to the left
Socialist candidate Karl Sorg said the Democratic Party has gone "too far to the right." A retired attorney, Sorg was a Democratic supporter until he felt his views shifting to the left. "The two parties [Republican and Democrat] have pushed too close together," Sorg said.

As the secretary for the organization Health Care for All-Oregon, Sorg said he focuses on establishing health care for all residents.

Sorg also said a change in the tax structure in general would benefit the state.

"I want to try to change the tax structure so the rich pay more," Sorg said. "We really need to level the playing field."



SORG

it's an atrocity that there are soft-drink machines in schools.

"We shouldn't be funding our schools by placing Pepsi machines in them because it's not healthy for our kids," Sorg said. "If we want to fund our schools, we should raise the taxes for the rich."

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