

Letters to the editor

Sign up today to vote

Empowerment — you must seek it because it will not seek you. Today's college students hold within their grasp a phenomenal power — the power to vote.

As a student, I know too many other students who choose to forgo empowerment by not registering to vote. Many college students are neglecting to participate in our democracy. However, of those students registered to vote, more than 80 percent did vote on election day. As you can see, once college students empower themselves through voting, they will hold a substantial ability to instigate political initiatives that affect higher education.

Including tremendous voter registration efforts by the Oregon Student Association at college campuses all over Oregon — including the University — last year, students must continue their efforts to become active members of our society by registering to vote.

It is not enough just to register to vote, but all students who care about the political issues that affect our daily lives should actually vote. Currently, in Oregon during the Special Legislative Sessions, decisions pertaining to higher education are being made. It is imperative that legislators realize the voting power of college students and recognize the needs and priorities of higher education.

Until college students put forth the effort to show their concern for decisions that could have tremendous effects on higher education, legislators will continue to feel little obligation to listen to college students on other important issues. Register to vote today!

Michael Sherman
sophomore
political science

Rorick's commentary spreads hate

I am responding to Aaron Rorick's "Taxing a pound of flesh" commentary (ODE, March 12). I thought that maybe somewhere hidden in his article was an opinion about the tobacco and alcohol taxes. However, I found it very offensive that Rorick used the rest of his article to express hateful thoughts against a group of people

in our society who are struggling with weight issues.

I think that it is problematic that Rorick uses health issues to point a finger at and target a group of people to tell them that they are wrong and that they are sinners. Furthermore, if Rorick wants to make a valid statement about taxes, he is intersecting church/religious issues with government and tax issues.

I guess I just don't understand how one person can be so hateful and at the same time proud of his hurtful statements against a group of people who are already struggling. Eugenics is not the answer. We can't just kill off people in this world that we don't feel are as good as us. It might be more productive to spread awareness and acceptance rather than hate.

Kristina Young
senior
anthropology and women's studies

Founders didn't mention Christianity

Although Tara Carleton, like many conservative op-ed writers of late, would like to assert that this country was founded by Christians for Christians, this is not the case ("Welcome to the land of forgotten purpose," ODE, March 11). If we resist the tradition and temptation of rewriting history to suit our personal beliefs and inspect history objectively, this becomes clear.

One of the primary concepts of our nation is that state and religion are kept separate. Carleton's comment that our nation was founded on the Christian faith is simply not true, in even the widest sense.

In the founding documents of our country, there's no mention of Christ, Jesus or Christianity — if one examines them objectively, the absence of Christianity is clear. The closest thing to it would be the Declaration of Independence mentioning "Nature's God," and a "creator," but this is vague enough to fit any religion.

Scott Britt was accused by Carleton of being un-American for criticizing the president. His actions weren't un-American, rather the epitome of what our country stands for, the First Amendment.

It's truly un-American, not only in the racist conflicts it earns support for, but also in the way we casually ignore all that our predecessors fought and died for: To secure a land in which church and state

are separate, in which freedom of religion is more than just a catch phrase, and in which liberty truly is a basic right for all.

William Moglia
senior
German and international studies

'Druggies' don't deserve financial aid

Would you want your representative fighting to repeal a section of a law that prohibits convicted druggies from receiving student financial aid tax money? I'm aware that some students use the financial aid specifically to purchase drugs to deal on campus.

Representative DeFazio co-sponsored Barney Frank's bill, HR 786, which would repeal a section of the Higher Education Act allowing convicted druggies to once again receive financial assistance. There are many deserving people. Why should tax money support druggies and dealers to go to college?

Druggies, in pursuing the repeal of this section of the law, claim that over 43,000 students have been denied assistance (or delayed) this year alone. Some people deserve help; some don't. It's that simple. Although I came to respect Representative DeFazio because of his integrity, he's now lost it.

John E. English
Springfield

Twinkies or cigarettes — which is more dangerous?

Aaron Rorick's March 12 commentary on taxing junk food rather than cigarettes as a way to generate state tax dollars is an exercise in comparing apples and oranges ("Taxing a pound of flesh," ODE). Yes, a diet heavy in junk foods (especially when combined with inactivity) can lead to obesity and diseases associated with it.

Yet smoking cigarettes is still the number-one cause of preventable premature death in the United States. To calculate whether obesity or smoking is a "lesser health evil" as justification for indulging in one or the other is just silly.

Perhaps a light hearted reading of his commentary as a tongue-in-cheek piece would be fine and laughable — unless, of course, you are overweight, in which case it is quite insulting.

Annie Dochnahl
health educator
University Health Center

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