

# COMMENTARY

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## Letters to the editor

### Gun control must be our decision

Let's talk about an issue of great importance. One of the most controversial issues today is the Second Amendment and the issue of gun control. Today, we see many debates as to whether we really do have the "right to bear arms" or whether it is an amendment that is outdated.

But what does that really mean? If the Second Amendment is out of date, who is to draw the line, and how should our society decide? Many ideas have been stated, and we see this in so many references in the media, schools and in daily conversation.

Organizations like the Nation Rifle Association, otherwise known as the NRA, have been very powerful in getting their opinions heard, since they have the ability to provide political contributions. However, in just the same way, those who are for gun control are just as vocal.

Yet this leaves us no precise answer. Who is to decide when all that happens is conflict between the same groups? What must be looked at is not only the wording of the amendment, but also the context it was placed in.

Many can say that we have the "right to bear arms," but how many really know why it is there in the first place? How many people know the cost of accidental deaths that occur because of this amendment? It is up to us to decide.

**Lisa Lam**  
freshman  
political science

### Stein cares about students

A mental disease is affecting the minds of people between the ages of 18-34, with serious consequences.

This disease causes them to care nothing for what goes on in the world around them or for decisions being made that affect their future. This deadly disease has a name: political apathy.

There is a cure, however; political leaders can care enough about this sector of the population to engage them. One candidate in the Oregon gubernatorial race is doing just this. She has volunteers at over 16 universities and community colleges across the state. More importantly, she talks to the students, asking them what issues are important to them.

She realizes students are not only an important and potentially powerful voting sector, but that issues important to them are issues important to Oregon's future. Her

name is Beverly Stein.

On April 21, a town-hall debate was held on the University campus for the Democratic gubernatorial candidates. Both Jim Hill and Bev Stein attended, allowing students and members of the Eugene community to find out where the candidates stood on important issues. Ted Kulongoski did not even bother to attend. He sent a representative instead, who gave Kulongoski's speech and then left, not participating in the question-and-answer debates.

A few months ago, Lane Community College hosted a similar event. Stein and Hill were there. Where was Kulongoski? Apparently he doesn't find students, Oregon's future or Lane County worth his time.

**Kim Monk-Goldsmith**  
senior  
romance languages  
and political science

### Corporations run the government

I am writing in response to Sanjai Tripathi's commentary in the Emerald ("Voters need to stop oppressing politicians," ODE, April 25). He states, "politicians are the most marginalized people in America" and that voters are the "overlords, the ones truly in charge." So, a politician is more marginalized than a minority living in an inner-city ghetto? The average American voter (an overlord?) has more control over the operation of our government than those involved in its day-to-day operation?

Tripathi mentions the state budget crisis and how politicians can neither advocate raising taxes or cutting services because it will anger people. Here's an idea: If the public is the overlord, why doesn't the government act in our interests and raise taxes for multimillion dollar corporations and leave the lower-middle class taxes and services alone? Answer: Corporations, the real overlords, control our government by funding the campaigns of politicians, and those politicians act in their interests. They wouldn't dream of raising corporate taxes for fear of angering their sponsors.

Voters have hardly any control over our government. Our role is to choose which rich person will continue to act in the interests of wealth. The only way our interests are addressed is if we get mad enough to scare the government, like during the civil rights movement. That was the last time the public influenced fundamental change in the government structure. Unless that happens again, we'll continue to have to bend to the wills of the powerful.

**Mason Gummer**  
junior  
sociology

### Editorial Policy

Letters to the editor and guest commentaries are encouraged. Letters are limited to 250 words and guest commentaries to 550 words. Please include contact information. The Emerald reserves the right to edit for space, grammar and style.

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## Don't single out greek system to make point about alcohol

### GUEST COMMENTARY

**Chris Alexander**

Ignorance, discrimination, stunned. Just a few words I have to describe my feelings.

I guess I shouldn't be surprised. By my recollection, the greeks have been targets from when I joined in 1991. When I look back (I'm an old man at 31 now), I tend to focus on the good rather than the bad, as we all do in life. Hopefully.

There were some amazing parties. But parties come and go, and my brothers were always there. When it was time to study or when money was tight, they were always there to help me out or talk me through the tough times. That was the real secret of the fraternity.

I was lucky enough to be surrounded by my best friends nine months a year. They were, and still are, the best friends I will ever have. I just don't get to see all of them as often as I would like anymore.

The greek system is an easy target. It's very simple to lump us all together as one nameless, faceless person. "Those damn greeks."

Well, we're not all the same. We are a collection of individuals. Each of us is just like every other person attending

the University. We each have our own names, our own goals and dreams.

We have just chosen to join a particular organization, and now we are being singled out. Drinking: Is it more rampant in the greek system? My personal experiences tell me no.

Are we noticed more because we are an easy target group? Yes. Is drinking a problem at the University, as it is at college campuses across the nation? Yes.

This is the first time many of us are out of our parents' watchful eye, and we tend to go a little nuts. The question is how to solve the problem of alcohol abuse — in the greek system as well as at the University in general.

Education, education, education. I know I was required to take "Writing 121" to graduate, but what about "Alcohol Awareness 101"? Teach the students that you don't have to drink to have a good time. You

don't have to drink to meet and talk to someone of the opposite sex. Education will teach us how to drink responsibly. It will help educate the student body on what it takes to become a living, breathing contributor to society.

After all, we may all choose different fields of study, but one of the greatest gifts college has bestowed upon us all is the ability to build relationships and work together. This isn't a class you can take, but a lesson that at one time or another must be learned.

Don't try to solve a problem by taking away the freedoms of those who have joined the greek system.

I feel lucky that I had my friends by my side when I chose to drink. They were able to keep an eye on me, just as I was able to keep an eye on them. It's that trust, a bond of friendship that made my fraternity so very important to me.

I would never wish to limit the students of the University from having the opportunity that I was given.

Chris Alexander, Class of '94, is a member of the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity.