

COMMENTARY

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Steven Baggs Emerald

Letters to the editor

Health care is no free lunch

This letter is in response to Ruth Duemler's letter on Oct. 7, concerning Measure 23 in the upcoming election.

Measure 23 is being proclaimed by its supporters as health and dental care for everyone, no matter what your income level. This is true, but the taxpayers must stop for a second and think where all the money is going to come from. Right out of the taxpayers' pocket! The harsh truth is that Measure 23 will force the average Oregonian to pay about *double* the income tax they do now.

Measure 23 is also one of the biggest job-killing measures Oregon has ever seen. Within two to four years, virtually everyone in Oregon working for health care providers and related businesses will be out of a job.

This measure will also hurt businesses in Oregon, small or large. Measure 23 will impose an 11.5 percent tax on employers in addition to the taxes they already pay on employees. The result: Established businesses will leave Oregon, and new businesses will go elsewhere because of Oregon's unfavorable business taxes, slowing growth and increasing unemployment even further.

Essentially, Measure 23 is putting every Oregonian on the Oregon Health Plan. Oregonians deserve the right to choose their health care plan and how much they want to pay. Vote no on Measure 23 to keep your freedom of choice.

Brian DeLaGrange
 senior
 business administration

Kent State's the answer

A way to stop the rioting in the University area — and all others as well — is to stage another Kent State. If we had shot those persons seen on the screen as they participated in the riot, there would be no more.

The guilty would be taken care of, the damage would have been lessened and a lesson would have been learned by the riot-minded type. The "innocent" would be freed of accusation, the University would be cleansed and we would all be ahead. Any observations?

Larry Traglio
 Eugene

Media should cover child abductions

I recognize "freedom of the press," but I also recognize your inability to grasp the real problem here. If the media hadn't placed the child alerts they did, and if the media coverage hadn't taken place, where do you think the sexual predators — that have been caught — would be today? I earnestly pray that neither you, nor any other family member, has to endure the pain and sleepless nights many parents have.

Rather than turn your head and become numb to these brutal attacks on our children, take your frustrations and put them to good use. Robert and Janet Cooke did just that, while they are still searching for their missing daughter, Rachel Cooke, missing since Jan. 10. She too hasn't made national news, but her family and friends have kept her search alive, along with a country

singer named Al White who wrote a song for Rachel Cooke and all missing children. Listen to the clip of "Rachel's Song" at www.kvue.com and you will hear how one man has taken a totally different attempt of restoring hope, faith and love.

One person can't do this alone. You turning your head and looking the other way won't change the situation, at least in your mind. I'm thankful the people I've talked to haven't suggested stopping the media coverage. I pray for your change of heart and thoughts on such terrible and horrendous crimes against children and older missing persons.

Pamela Shephard
 Texas

X-Box makes us fat

On a recent trip to the Student Recreation Center, I noticed a new X-Box game station. On the yet-to-be-turned-on screen was a handwritten caveat about how X-Box donates money to intramural athletics.

Now, instead of working out, students can sample the newest incentive to join the ranks of Pepsi-swilling couch potatoes. In order to make the irony complete, could the rec center move the new soda machines next to the X-Box? A generation of obese, apathetic, physically unfit students awaits.

Ezekiel O'Brien
 Eugene

Nearsighted forest policy

In response to Salena De La Cruz's Voice Off ("HFI good for timber harvest," ODE, Oct. 10):

Adrian Hoffman
 junior
 environmental science

Anti-loggers should re-check facts about forest thinning

While the Oct. 10 Voice Off "Forest thinning not the solution" undoubtedly tugged at many a liberal heartstring, it is surprising to note that the author of the piece presented her case totally devoid of factual information; only emotion-based conjecture.

Reasoned opinion backed by fact is the stuff of stellar commentary. Pure conjecture based on the assumption that Republicans will stop at nothing to pave over everything in the name of progress, lining their pockets along the way, is lazy journalism directed at the unthinking portion of the University population.

Let us address some of the author's more colorful points.

"Mature forests, however densely packed, do not cause forest fires..."

True, but dead trees do. Overgrowth creates a breeding ground for pestilence and disease, killing trees; dead trees are ripe for fire, therefore; when lightning strikes, it is reasonable to assume that acts of God may spark forest fires, but the inaction of men — more specifically, inept bureaucracy — are responsible for recent fires of

biblical proportions. Apparently, the writer didn't get the memo on this one.

"People who build their houses in the middle of forests ... deserve what they get."

Oh, really, and all of this time I was under the impression that we Republicans were cold, heartless and uncaring of the needs of the citizenry. While people may be at increased risk for fire damage living in a heavily-forested region, there is no reason why homeowners should not be allowed to take proper precautions in order to save their homes. Environmental groups have prevented them from doing just that.

Take, for instance, a 1999 proposal to thin out the dangerously fire-prone Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest in Arizona. This proposal was appealed and subsequently challenged in court by the Tucson-based "Center for Biological Diversity"; a final decision was still on hold when the forest — and nearby towns — were engulfed by recent conflagrations in that state.

"By reducing unnecessary regulatory obstacles that hinder active forest management," as the proposal states, "Bush is clearly looking to let his friends in the big-business logging companies have their go at it — unhindered."

Care to back that opinion with fact? After scouring through our president's forest proposal, readily available online, one fails to find any mention of quid pro quo. When will liberals realize that logging companies do not profit from the devastation of forest land? Devoid of trees, timber companies would indeed be out of business, would they not? More trees are lost due to forest fires (1 million acres annually on average) than are lost to harvesting. In addition, companies such as International Paper have been reforesting since 1898, averaging 48 million acres of trees planted per year, five times more than they harvest annually. Can the Sierra Club match that?

Scott J. Kane is a pre-journalism major and is a member of the College Republicans.