

# COMMENTARY

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Monday, April 21, 2003

## The Emerald's endorsement: vote this week

The ASUO elections have hit the home stretch, with the general election running 8 a.m. today through 5 p.m. Wednesday, and so the editorial board offers up its general endorsements.

Detailed endorsements were published on April 9; for students who would like to read them, they are located at [www.dailyemerald.com](http://www.dailyemerald.com) (click on "News," then "ASUO ELECTIONS" for full coverage). For now, we offer a bit more about the ASUO Executive race and the two races where our endorsed candidate didn't make it past the primary. For the rest, we stand by our original endorsements.

### ASUO Executive Maddy Melton Eddy Morales

Students have a clear choice, and an easy one. Melton and Morales have been closely involved with student groups as well as the Executive and the general student population. Their opponents' experience mainly relates to budgeting and the EMU, which isn't what this job needs — student senators and ASUO staff should handle the budgets. Melton and Morales will fill the office of the president perfectly, with dynamic leadership, a commitment to being the voice of students and the know-how to bridge the gulf between students and legislators.

Melton, in particular, knows how to represent student interests. From fighting on the federal level for more Pell Grant funding to winning students more control of their campus on the state level, Melton has already shown that when students lobby, politicians listen. Plus, she has the connections to build grassroots support at the same time she lobbies effectively. This duo will be strong, understanding leaders.

### Senate Seat 2, PFC Mena Ravassipour

Ravassipour will continue the trend of improving communication between groups and the senate, she already has an understanding of senate procedure and she believes in representing the voice of those who aren't able to speak out. She'll make a welcome addition to the PFC.

### Senate Seat 16 Science Gabrielle Guidero

This is a tough decision, as both candidates seem to have the interest and the ability. But Guidero takes it by a nose, as we share her interest in bringing more speakers and events to campus, and in programming that benefits the broadest possible cross-section of students.

### Senate Seat 1, PFC

Adrian Gilmore

### Senate Seat 3, PFC

Beth Overgard

### Senate Seat 4, EMU

Rodrigo Moreno Villamar

### Senate Seat 7, ADFC

Laura Schulthies

### Senate Seat 8, ADFC

Jesse Harding

### Senate Seat 13

A&L/Journalism

Stefan Myers

### Senate Seat 15

Social Science

Adam Turcott

### EMU Board At-Large

Midterm seat

Slade Leeson

### PFC At-Large

Two-year term

Toby Piering

### Associated Students Presidential Advisory Council

Nick Hudson

### Editorial policy

This editorial represents the opinion of the Emerald editorial board. Responses can be sent to [letters@dailyemerald.com](mailto:letters@dailyemerald.com).

## Resisting necessary taxation

Raise taxes. No position is more reviled by voters or poisonous to a political career. Yet politicians in Salem are faced with doing just that as the state faces a potentially disastrous budget shortfall.

Gov. Ted Kulongoski admitted for the first time in a recent interview with The Oregonian that some type of tax increase appears unavoidable. He predicted the Legislature will opt to raise taxes rather than make the unpalatably drastic cuts required to balance the state budget, as mandated by Oregon's constitution.

Some prognosticators estimate that Oregon will face a daunting \$2.5 billion deficit, out of total spending of \$11.1 billion. Such figures may worsen when new budget projections come out in May.



Chuck Slothower  
 Clock tower hush

The state cannot operate without more money. Already, school districts around Oregon have cut instructional days to deal with meager budgets. Some are considering radical plans such as cutting out high school sports entirely, and the Springfield School District plans to fire 67 teachers and 35 support staff to make up for a \$7.5 million deficit.

One striking aspect of Oregon's budget crisis is the disparity between the relative wealth of the federal government and the near-poverty of state government. While American-provided Blackhawk helicopters swarm over Colombia eradicating cocaine fields and legitimate crops along with them, Lane County heroin addicts face sharp reductions in their access to methadone.

Many critics opine that the state should just tighten its belt during bad times, as consumers do. However, governments provide services that cannot be easily cut without hurting people or angering constituents, and demands on government agencies increase during economic slumps.

Contrary to the views of talk radio's finest, Oregon's budget crisis was brought on not by lavish spending, but a witch's brew of economic downturn, high unemployment, a tax structure greatly reliant on personal income and the state's inex-



Peter Utsey Emerald

pliable lack of a rainy day fund.

Oregon has been hit particularly hard by the nationwide economic doldrums, as it relies on income taxes for much of its revenue. Income tax revenues have a tendency to drop sharply in economic slumps, a problem compounded by Oregon's frighteningly high unemployment rate.

Sales taxes, which Oregonians have defiantly rejected at the ballot box on nine separate occasions, hold up better when the economy turns sour. But they're also damn annoying.

Kulongoski and state legislators find themselves in an exquisite bind. Oregonians want state services, but have proven unwilling to pay for them, as witnessed by the November defeat of Measure 28.

The governor in particular finds himself caught between a rock and a hard place. Kulongoski ran on a platform of restoring faith in state government by streamlining state services while holding taxes steady.

Kulongoski looks prepared to break his campaign promise to avoid tax increases as the magnitude of the state budget shortfall becomes clear. This may come back to haunt him. Though Kulongoski

won't face reelection until 2006, voters have a notoriously long memory when it comes to tax increases.

Rather than raising income or property tax rates, Kulongoski is weighing targeted tax increases, including raising the beer tax. This is a bad idea. Besides the fact that I'm still recovering from the football team's pummeling by Wake Forest, all Oregonians should share the tax burden. Nondrinkers use the roads, too. An increase in income or property tax rates would more fairly distribute the tax burden.

Soon, Kulongoski and state legislators will be forced to find the courage to raise taxes. In the long term, Kulongoski envisions a grand overhaul of Oregon's tax structure.

Such an overhaul is sorely needed. As much as I hate the idea of an Oregon sales tax, it may be the only answer to providing stable government funding. A rainy day fund wouldn't hurt, either.

May we wish Kulongoski and our legislators the best of luck in dealing with this precarious situation.

Contact the columnist at [chuckslothower@dailyemerald.com](mailto:chuckslothower@dailyemerald.com). His views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

### Online poll

Each week, the Emerald publishes the previous week's poll results and the coming week's poll question. Visit [www.dailyemerald.com](http://www.dailyemerald.com) to vote.

**Last week:** What holiday will you be celebrating this Sunday?

**Results:** 94 total votes

Easter — 40.4 percent, or 38 votes

420 — 21.3 percent, or 20 votes

Both — 6.4 percent, or 6 votes

Neither — 22.3 percent, or 21 votes

What's 420? — 3.2 percent, or 3 votes

Leave me alone! — 6.4 percent, or 6 votes

**This week:** How often would you like to see the Pulse (entertainment) section in the Emerald?

**Choices:** Every day; Twice per week; Once per week; What's Pulse?; Leave me alone!

### Letter to the editor

#### Retract endorsements for fair election coverage

It is your job as journalists to be objective and cover the ASUO elections in a fair and balanced fashion. In the words of your own Michael J. Kleckner, "the art of news is to sort and sift, and to present, in a fair and balanced manner." I could not agree more.

Moreover, Kleckner also stated, "We do not necessarily believe a candidate is automatically more or less qualified because of their ability or inability to answer rules questions." And earlier, "Such a judgment is for readers to make." Once again, Kleckner has made a great point. It's almost like Fox News' "We report, you decide" slogan.

However, five days prior to that

statement, he said, "The elections begin April 9, and on that day the editorial board will devote the entire Commentary section to the Emerald's endorsements." Emerald endorsements? But I thought Kleckner said the judgment was for us to make?

As a regular reader of the Emerald, your decision to run this endorsement page upsets me. If you do not believe that qualification is not determined by their "ability or inability to answer rules questions," then why did you say, "We will be considering the transcripts of interviews as well as campaign materials."

I respectfully request for you to retract your endorsements and let the students decide which candidate is right for themselves.

Ryan J. Coussens  
 freshman  
 pre-journalism