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DeFazio meets constituents

Eugene's U.S. representative talked issues with 100 people at a local public forum Wednesday night

By Ayisha Yahya

Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., said Wednesday the Bush administration is not investing in higher education, but is proposing more cuts that will adversely affect students.

"They're disinvesting in education — that's the bottom line," he said at a town hall meeting in the Lane County Courthouse. He said the government planned to cut Pell Grants to thousands of students and further restrict access to those grants for other students.

"It's obscene," he said. "I'm opposing them as best as I can." DeFazio did not say what form his opposition is taking.

More than 100 people poured into the courthouse to get DeFazio's views on diverse issues ranging from the national debt and Medicare to the war in Iraq.

DeFazio expressed concern about the budget deficit.

"This year we can expect the largest annual deficit in history," he said. "In the future it could be even more, even if the economy recovers."

He said part of the reason for the deficit was the current administration's decision to introduce tax cuts for the nation's wealthiest. He said other decisions — such as the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement — had cost the nation three million manufacturing jobs, some of them from Oregon.

"Washington is the only place in the world where, when people find themselves in a hole, they dig it deeper," he said.

Speaking on terrorism, the congressman said the Patriot Act was a mistake and that he was one of the few to vote against it.

"They do not need the Patriot Act to deal with any real terrorism," he said. He said he also voted against the war in Irao.

"I did not see a clear and present threat," he said. He added that more nations must be involved in the rebuilding of Iraq and share the cost of the reconstruction with the United States.

"We have to internationalize the rebuilding of Iraq," DeFazio said.

James Johnstone of the Cascadia

Wildlands Project said he is always delighted to hear DeFazio speak, especially on the importance of preventing old-growth logging.

"He's a strong champion of oldgrowth protection — he has been for a decade," Johnstone said.

DeFazio said he had asked both the Clinton and current administrations to abandon the harvest of old growth forests. He received a "golden spine" award for his work on environmental conservation from one of the audience members.

Eugenean Mark Robinwitz said he also agreed with many of the positions DeFazio took.

"I thought he was good, but on the 9-11 issue, he's missing the main point," he said, "which is that the Bush administration was complicit in what happened."

Robinwitz said the government had received warnings, which it did not heed.

DeFazio concluded his town hall meeting tour Wednesday night in Springfield.

Contact the reporter at ayishayahya@dailyemerald.com

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ANTH 170	Intro to Human Origins	Nelson, G.	42480	203 Condon
GEOG 206	Geography of Oregon	Power, M.	42481	106 Condon
HIST 192	Japan Past & Present	Hanes, J.	42483	373 McKenzie
HIST 382	Latin America 1910-Present	Aguirre, C.	42482	112 McKenzie
INTL 240	Perspectives on			
	International Development	Verdu-Cano, C.	42484	112 Eslinger
PSY 330	Thinking	Arrow, H.	42485	154 Straub
PSY 375	Development	Measelle, J.	42486	216 Allen
SOC 301	American Society	Dreiling, M.	42488	123 McKenzie



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