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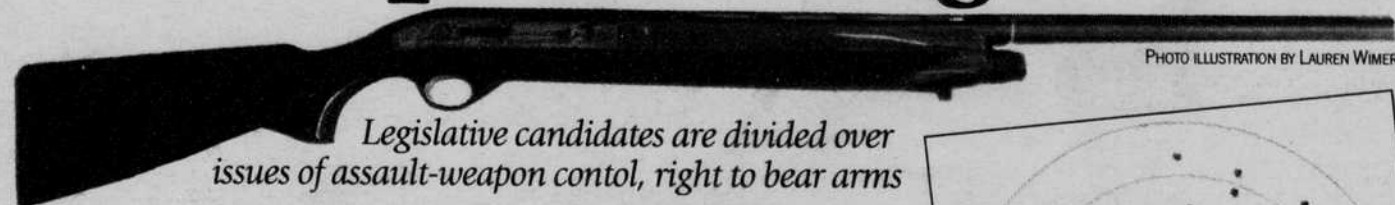
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★ AMERICA VOTES 2004 ★

Gun policies target voters



Legislative candidates are divided over issues of assault-weapon control, right to bear arms

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY LAUREN WIMER

BY PARKER HOWELL
SENIOR NEWS REPORTER

With the war in Iraq and controversial domestic issues at the forefront of political debate, national and statewide gun policies have often been lost in the shuffle of public discourse.

Yet almost two months after the Sept. 13 expiration of a contentious 10-year federal ban on assault rifles — which prohibited the sale and possession of semiautomatic firearms with certain features — many candidates currently running for office are taking stances on the level of restrictions the government should place on which guns Americans can own and where they can take their firearms.

Presidential race

In the race for the White House, candidates George W. Bush and Sen. John Kerry have identified themselves as sportsmen, but have both spoken out in favor of some restrictions on gun ownership. Their campaigns have primarily focused on the recent sunset of the assault weapons ban.

The ban outlawed specific brands of firearms and several firearm features, such as pistol grips and ammunition magazines that held more than 10 rounds. A provision in the law set the ban to expire this year unless Congress renewed it, which it did not.

During the final presidential debate on Oct. 13, President Bush said he supported

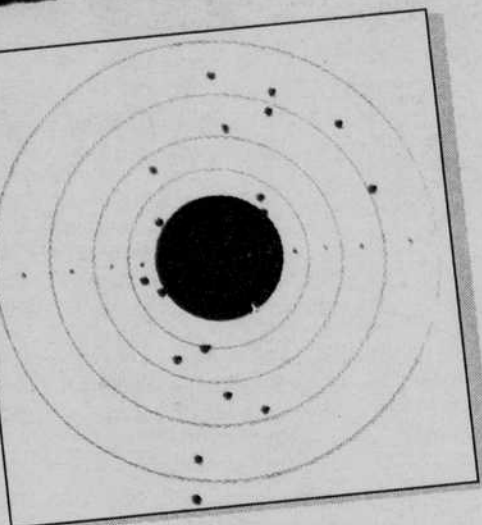
extending the ban, but did not encourage Congress to reinstate it because of bipartisan advocacy against it.

Bush added that “law-abiding citizens ought to be able to own a gun,” but said he believes background checks should be necessary everywhere guns are purchased.

The president also said comprehensive prosecution of those who commit gun crimes is “the best way to protect our citizens from guns.” Bush said prosecutions of gun crimes have risen about 68 percent under his administration.

“Neighborhoods are safer when we crack down on people who commit crimes with guns,” Bush said. “To me, that’s the best way to secure America.” Project Safe Neighborhoods, a partnership between state and federal law enforcement agencies that targets criminal misuse of firearms, has “substantially increased the enforcement of existing gun laws,” according to www.georgewbush.com. Violent crime rates have dropped 21 percent during the three years that Project Safe Neighborhoods has been in effect, and at least 72 percent of federal gun-crime convictions under the project have resulted in a prison sentence of three years or more, according to the Web site.

Kerry — who said he is a hunter and gun owner, as well as a former district attorney — harshly criticized Bush’s stance on the assault weapons ban during the final debate. The senator called the expiration of the ban a



“failure of presidential leadership” that allows terrorists to purchase dangerous weapons. “Because of the president’s decision today, law enforcement officers will walk into a place that will be more dangerous,” Kerry said. “Terrorists can now come into America and go to a gun show, and without even a background check, buy an assault weapon today. And that’s what Osama bin Laden’s handbook said — because we captured it in Afghanistan.”

Kerry said his views reflect those of the law enforcement community.

“I know something about prosecuting,” he said. “And most of the law enforcement agencies in America wanted that assault weapons ban. They don’t want to go into a drug bust and be facing an AK-47.”

Kerry also disputes Bush’s claim that his administration has enforced existing gun laws, citing a Justice Department Inspector General report that showed less than 1 percent of the 120,000 people who illegally tried to purchase guns was prosecuted for the crimes, according to www.johnkerry.com.

Kerry also favors closing the “gun-show loophole,” which allows guns to be exchanged between private dealers and buyers at gun shows without background checks, according to the site.

U.S. Senate race

Democratic candidate Ron Wyden said in an e-mail statement that he supported renewing the ban on assault weapons. During his last four years in office, Wyden has voted on several gun-control-related bills in the Senate.

In 2004, Wyden voted “no” on the unsuccessful Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act, which would have prohibited certain civil lawsuits against gunmanufacturers pertaining to acts of criminal misuse.

Wyden voted “yes” in 2000 on a rejected

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Is gun control a key issue in this election?

“The election is a referendum on Iraq and gun control is not a factor in that. I haven’t heard it talked about almost at all in debates and other political forums.”

BRENDAN MORLEY
JAPANESE



“I’m more concerned with college tuition, health care, tax cuts-type stuff than gun control. I guess I thought about it back in the day when they did the whole Michael Moore, Columbine thing.”

JENNIFER ISEAN
JOURNALISM

“I think it’s an issue, and people have been discussing it, but I don’t know how much division there is between the two candidates for people to be polarized about it.”

LANCE LUCAS
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION



“I’m always interested in it, but it certainly doesn’t seem like it’s getting any attention.”

EMILIE CATE
GRADUATE COUNSELING
PSYCHOLOGY

IN BRIEF

Event invites UO students to enjoy cultural offerings

The 10th annual Weaving New Beginnings — a celebration meant to welcome faculty, staff and students of color to the University — will take place in the EMU Ballroom tonight at 6:15 p.m.

The event, which is free to the public, will feature free music and food.

“WNB is a remarkably important opportunity for students, es-

pecially incoming students of color, to learn about everything that awaits them at the University,” ASUO Multicultural Advocate Maria Cortez said on an ASUO Web site dedicated to the event.

The Weaving New Beginnings opening event took place Wednesday from noon to 3 p.m. in the EMU Amphitheater and included musical performances, speakers and dancing. Right, Multicultural Center Outreach Coordinator Aaron J. Martin, a philosophy and ethnic studies major, performs in the EMU Amphitheater.

— Jared Paben



LAUREN WIMER | SENIOR PHOTOGRAPHER

Bakery site may hinder basketball arena plans

Members of the Fairmont Neighbors Association request zone change, site review

BY MEGHANN M. CUNIFF
NEWS REPORTER

The Eugene hearings official heard testimony Wednesday night regarding a zone-change request from Williams Bakery that would change the site from one that requires a site review to one that doesn’t. The opposition was given one more week to submit new evidence before the issue will be closed for discussion. A decision will be made by Nov. 18.

Because of recent changes in site-review criteria, attorney Kim O’Dea said the request from Williams Bakery is legitimate.

“Under the new site-review criteria, site review is just no longer justified on this property,” O’Dea said.

A site review lets the public discuss a site’s impact on the surrounding neighborhood and scrutinize any aspects of the site that may be considered a nuisance.

Those opposed to the request voiced concerns with the bakery, located just east of campus, being the targeted spot for the University’s new basketball arena and what the lack of a required site review would mean if the University does acquire the site.

O’Dea said the opposition against the zone change is unfounded and as soon as the opposition has a clear understanding of the current site-review criteria and of what omitting the site review entails, “much of the argument goes away.”

The law does not require a site review for the parking area currently on the site, but co-chairman of the Fairmont Neighbors Association Jeff Nelson said if the University does plan on building the new arena on the site, it should be taken into consideration before labeling a site review as unnecessary.

Nelson said a site review is “critical in trying to have a buffer between the commercial area and the residential area,” which is a pressing neighborhood goal.

Mary Ann Holson, a 34-year resident of the Fairmont neighborhood, said she is very concerned with the possibility of the area becoming a construction site and wants to make sure the public is involved in the planning process.

“The neighborhood wants a say in what will be located on these blocks and what it will look like,” Holson said.

After the meeting, Holson said she wants to make sure the beauty of the historic Fairmont neighborhood is preserved. She and her husband lived in Los Angeles during a time when many nice areas were getting “slummed out,” and she said the effects on the community were devastating. “We saw the happenings of bad planning,” she said.

University architecture student Michael Hahn and two other students attended the meeting to better verse themselves in what the neighborhood concerns are about the proposed stadium.

Hahn said he is in a class that is working with the architect who is designing the new arena, and he hopes to relay the concerns that were voiced at the meeting to the architect.

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