



BRET FURTWANGLER | GRAPHIC ARTIST

■ Editorial

Kulongoski: Finally, a politician we approve of!

Governor Ted Kulongoski has been involved in Oregon politics for more than 30 years—in the House, the Senate, as Attorney General and as a judge on the Oregon Supreme Court. After a quarter century, it's hard to laud Kulongoski for every good move: All we have room to praise are some of Kulongoski's most recent, and exceedingly wise, political moves.

The end of June, 2005, saw Kulongoski signing House Bill 2662, which gave domestic abuse victims unemployment benefits if safety is an issue at work. Kulongoski has never been shy about upholding women's rights: In 2004, under the Governor's signature, a measure was created that required the Oregon Department of Justice to pay for Emergency Contraception for victims of sexual assault.

On July 31, a statement was released detailing Kulongoski's opinion on mental health parity; a policy that would provide equal resources for treating physical and mental health within the state. Our governor is lauding the passage of Senate Bill 1, which gives Oregon residents (especially those with lower incomes) the ability to easily and inexpensively take control of a mental illness. In his advocacy of mental health parity, Kulongoski shows his ability to take preventative measures against problems such as street violence and drug abuse, two cultural diseases often spawned from mental illness.

In July, Kulongoski made another progressive move by opening Oregon's first commercial center producing biodiesel. Kulongoski has promised to encourage a growth in the state's biodiesel industry, in order to produce an alternative fuel to gasoline.

In another recent hurrah for the environment, Kulongoski promised to use his veto to ensure that Oregon might someday have fuel emission standards as high as those in California. When a budget bill passed that kept business emissions standards down and dangerous toxic emissions up, Kulongoski would have none of it: As Governor, he wants to use his veto and maintain our state's environment for years to come.

Governor Kulongoski has proven himself a politician who takes his work seriously and personally, as seen from his position on the Capitol steps, rallying with other Oregonians for the passage of SB1000. Oregon can sleep peacefully knowing that our Governor is personally vested in the concept of equal rights, as he ought to be.

Not the last, and certainly not the least of his good ideas, Oregon Governor Ted Kulongoski wants to spend 61 percent of General Fund Revenues for education. Kulongoski also supports a seamless school system, wherein all children entering pre-school will have the chance to go all the way through to graduate school. The Governor is even quoted as saying that "It's time for us to all step up ... and do what's right for Oregon's future by making all of education a priority."

Finally, a politician who has his head on straight.

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■ In my opinion

The walls are closing in on women

Nation-wide discussion regarding women's rights has taken a recent interest in privacy, and for good reason. Newly appointed Judge John D. Roberts is seen by many conservatives as the golden ticket to a sweet candy fountain of babies; he could be the vote responsible for overturning Roe V. Wade.

Can the argument be made (as was done in Roe V. Wade) that the Fourth Amendment's protection against unreasonable search and seizure is tantamount to the protection of privacy, and therefore the right of a woman to seek abortion?

I have discovered this: These discussions are not about privacy, they are about personal space, and it is time that they were framed (possibly in the Constitution) in such a way.

Women especially have felt the brunt of America's personal encroachment; think everything from the Patriot Act's wiretaps to pharmacists refusing to dispense birth control. This sentiment of anger over losing space emerged in myself after a recent experience with two girlfriends.

For the first part of our evening, my friends and I sat in the living room with all blinds closed, on account of the large hookah resting atop our coffee table. We always close the shades, but at least a little fear remains. In a perhaps paranoid state, my friends and I got to wondering, what if the federal government had reason to suspect one of us of terrorism? After all, we are three very liberal college students who have signed more than one petition, with a valid name and address. If through an investigation someone came across our big blue hookah, we would be prosecuted in an instant.

So we sit with our shades closed; often lamenting the fact that we can't peacefully smoke on our own porch, without the threat of intervention.

On this night, once it was completely dark and about an hour away from midnight, the three of us decided to walk four blocks to the nearest store and buy fruit.

Unfortunately, the Eugene outdoors after dark did nothing to give us the space we had been craving while



AILEE SLATER
FURTHER FROM PERFECTION

trapped inside the living room.

Shadows fell up and down the street, run-down pick-up trucks blocked cool yellow lights. As luck would have it, we left the house discussing the possibility of intruders; in a few moments, when a tall male neighbor walked out of his house, the silence between the three of us was cue enough that no one was comfortable with this walk.

But no one said anything, so we walked on.

After all, our neighbor probably wasn't a rapist or murderer; at any rate, he didn't try to attack us. Just the same, my friends and I hovered toward the middle of the street. We then chose sides to walk on, based on their darkness/bushes ratio. When we reached a busy street, our three sighs of relief were audible.

Until, still jumpy and now walking past a dark field, we heard a male voice shout from the road. Though his words were indiscernible, the heckler's meaning was clear: You can't be a girl and walk at night in shorts. We ran the rest of the way to the store, hurrying in, shaking. It took me at least a minute to get myself together and pick out a peach.

We were desperate for a safe place. All night, we had been searching for safe space.

Home was not safe because we could be spied on by people who would send us to jail (even if this situation was not probable, it seemed way too close to possible). The community was not safe, or ample in space because the threat of violent attack kept the three of us women confined. We huddled together; we only walked on certain streets; we will certainly never take such a trip again, nor wear a certain type of clothing after dark.

The threat of male violence is still keeping women confined, and inevitably trapped at home, begging the question of how far our society has come.

Besides the threat of violence, women's bodies are also privy to constant encroachment of the surrounding world. Television commercials and programs tell us what to eat and what not to eat. Don't you hate it when your mother bothers you about food? I hate it when my television set, every 30 seconds or so, reminds me about eating and the way that I will look as a result. Women everywhere are tired of this capitalist, classist tirade which relies upon someone else looking at my body and my space and telling me what to do with it.

The right to abortion, of course, is of the same logic. It's not just a right to privacy, it's a right to have the personal space to do what we women feel is right for ourselves. No government can ever know the situation with a fetus better than the woman carrying that fetus herself; she, and no one else, should have the ultimate decision on her body.

The Constitution shouldn't be framed to persecute the guilty, but rather to protect the innocent. It is often easier to find and punish the guilty than it is to find and save the innocent. I'm not impressed by what the Patriot Act helps America do, because my friends and I know the statistics on how many women are victims of sexual assault, violent crime and domestic violence. According to current numbers, one of us three has or will experience some form of sexual abuse or assault within her lifetime.

Until those statistics change, the government cannot with good conscience eliminate Roe v. Wade; it is time for the misogyny to end. How dare the Supreme Court tell me (and accept as beneficial to the nation) that I am losing my space and my body to the man on the street, the man in my home, and the man in the judge's chair.

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