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Bill adds provisions to Medical Marijuana Act

One of the clarifications under SB 1085 would establish a 24-hour accessible database of registered marijuana grow sites and patients

BY TIM O'ROURKE
FREELANCE REPORTER

The smoke hasn't yet cleared from the debate surrounding a medical marijuana bill waiting to be re-voted on by the Oregon Senate this week.

The House Committee on State and Federal Affairs amended the original medical marijuana bill, Senate Bill 1085, to include provisions on workplace issues, and agencies like the ACLU are fuming.

"When this bill passed the Senate it represented a carefully crafted compromise. Unfortunately,

the House State and Federal Affairs Committee added a divisive amendment pushed by some employers that undermines the fragile balance of the bill," the ACLU said in a floor statement to members of the House.

"(It) would eliminate possible legal protection for disabled workers who are registered medical marijuana patients."

SB 1085 was originally passed in the Senate last month and again with House amendments Aug. 2. The bill's chief backer, Sen. Bill Morrisette (D-Springfield), was unavailable

for comment.

The purpose of the bill was to clarify some ambiguities in Oregon's medical marijuana law. It called for a 24-hour accessible database and clarified size restrictions on marijuana plants and grow-site definitions, among other provisions.

With the House-added provisions, SB 1085 would, in part, allow employers to fire employees because they have marijuana in their system, even when there is no evidence of on-the-job impairment.

At press time, the bill was expected to be voted on by the Senate Wednesday night or Thursday, if time allowed. If it passes, the bill will head to the governor's desk for a signature or veto.

SB 1085, which originally passed in the Oregon Senate unanimously July 20, and 39-14 in the House after amendments Aug. 2, clarifies some sections and makes changes to others in the voter-approved Oregon Medical Marijuana Act, which went into effect Dec. 3, 1998.

Many advocates are upset, not only because of the recent amendments, but because the bill eliminates the "affirmative defense" that patients and caregivers found to be growing illegal amounts of marijuana have successfully used in court.

Currently, a patient or caregiver can use the "affirmative defense" to argue that they're growing more marijuana than is permitted by law out of medical necessity, making the

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Maung Maung Tinn

*While he lives simply he gives generously to his people
and though he is in exile he never stops sharing
his heart and spirit with everyone he meets.*

*Maung Maung Tinn lives
and works as a child care medic at
Dr. Cynthia's Mae Tao clinic on the Thai/Burma border.
Originally an economic refugee of Burma,
his powerful paintings have made him
famous as an advocate for human rights
and now, a political refugee as well.
While Maung Maung Tinn earns
enough money as a painter to live independently,
he chooses instead to live communally
at the clinic and use all the proceeds from his work
to help others less fortunate,
stating that his only wish in life is
to help his people.*

COURTESY

Curt and Cathy Bradner of Art Exiled sell packets of 4-by-8-inch post cards that represent the work of exiled artists Maung Maung Tinn, Nay Thit and ZMO.

Painting a new future

The Bradners support Burmese refugees through their program Art Exiled, which markets the work of exiled artists internationally

BY GABE BRADLEY
NEWS EDITOR

Eugene residents Curt and Cathy Bradner know what it's like to leave everything behind.

"In 1998 we sold our house and our business in hope that we'd bicycle around the world in search of something more meaningful than our previous careers," Curt Bradner said.

So in 1999 they found themselves in

Thailand — far from their Colorado-based mechanical engineering firm.

By the time they reached Thailand, the weather prevented them from bicycling any further.

"We just needed to take a break," Mr. Bradner said. "There was a woman who was running a medical clinic and we heard she was looking for help."

The country of Burma has been under the

control of a military dictatorship since 1962. As such, there are many refugees in neighboring Thailand — refugees who ended up at the same clinic as the Bradners.

The Bradners found themselves faced with the task of keeping a group of refugee children occupied during the days.

"We volunteered to work for a month and we ended up staying for five years," Mr. Bradner said.

Mr. Bradner taught bicycle repair to the older children while Cathy Bradner started giving the younger children supplies for drawing and painting.

"These kids had never had crayons in their

lives," Mr. Bradner said. "So it was a big deal."

This was the birth of Art Exiled, a non-profit group that uses art to help those who are forced to leave their home countries.

"Art Exiled got started by accident in 1999 when my wife, Cathy, began giving crayons and watercolors to children in a refugee camp," Bradner said.

The program really took off when the Bradners met Maung Maung Tinn, a Burmese refugee in Thailand.

Tinn ended up working at the clinic with the Bradners. He had little formal training in art.

"It would be the equivalent of high school art classes," Mr. Bradner said. "He used to paint just

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ASUO Executive gets active in budget preparations

This change will involve the ASUO Executive more in the budgeting process for incidental-fee-funded departments and organizations

BY NICHOLAS WILBUR
NEWS REPORTER

The ASUO Executive recently decided to take a larger role in preparing 2006-07 budget

recommendations for all of the University's incidental-fee-funded departments and organizations under contract with the student government.

Fee-funded organizations with contracts, such as Oregon Student Public Interest Research Group (OSPIRG) and the Student Recreation Center, are given an agreed upon amount of funding in exchange for their service. Formerly, the seven-member Programs Finance Committee proposed the amount of student incidental fees that would be allocated to each organization, with the executive making four or five of these budget

recommendations. The change will give ASUO President Adam Walsh and Finance Coordinator Nicholas Hudson a more active role in preparing organizations' budgets before they are sent to the ASUO Senate for a vote.

"As the represented voice of students, we'd like to make sure we're fulfilling the process put in

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