

LONSDALE LAYS IT ON THE TABLE

Human rights, timber and campaign financing tops Senate candidate's agenda

BY BETH A. ALLEN

All you really need to do to find out how Harry Lonsdale, candidate for U.S. Senate, feels about gay and lesbian rights is to walk through the front door of his campaign office. There, on a folding table, amongst stacks of mimeographed news clippings highlighting his campaign, is Lonsdale's human rights policy. The first statement says "I support and promise to work for full civil and human rights for all Americans, no matter their race, gender, religion, or sexual orientation."

Not one to skimp on the specifics, Lonsdale goes on to say he supports eliminating discrimination against lesbians and gays in the armed forces and in immigration policies and improving access for gay and lesbian couples to federal entitlement and other programs. He also supports adding a prohibition against discrimination based on sexual orientation to the 1964 Civil Rights Act.

"We need to amend the civil rights act of 1964 with a sexual orientation clause. You bet. It's an idea whose time has come, to use a cliché," says Lonsdale, who has never held an elected office. "The world's changed a heck of a lot in the last 10 years. It's changed enormously and it's time we recognized that in the U.S. Congress."

Although Lonsdale says he doesn't want to get into the debate over ACT UP's outing of Sen. Mark Hatfield, he says he is willing to attack Hatfield's stand. "I don't comment at all on Mark Hatfield's sexual orientation or anybody else's," Lonsdale says. "I am willing to attack him (Hatfield) on his stand. I think he's been wrong. He's one of the Senate's gay-bashers, he and Jesse Helms and this guy (Sen.) Armstrong from Colorado. I think they are three of the more prominent people that have not shown courtesy or the right attitude toward people who see the world in a different way. They've just not been open-minded. Let's say they're close-minded. Hatfield's in that crowd and I think that's one of the reasons to remove

him.

But Hatfield's dismal voting record on human rights issues is only one reason Lonsdale wants to dethrone the five-term legislator.

"Mark Hatfield is the guy most responsible for cutting down our ancient forests in Oregon. I thought about running against Bob Smith, who I think is wrong on issues, maybe even more than Mark Hatfield is. That's why I've taken on Hatfield," Lonsdale explains. "He's also wrong on other issues. He's wrong on choice, he's wrong on campaign finance, but the thing that I really hold against him the most is his timber position."

To Lonsdale, the timber in Oregon is a bounty because of its beauty. He fears the timber industry won't be stopped before that bounty becomes logged booty.

"I'm really worried about the timber crisis in our state. The state is more polarized over this timber question now than it's ever been. What he (Hatfield) is trying to do in timber is what Oregon was doing 25 years ago. Our state has changed a lot in 25 years. We're no longer so strongly dependent on the timber industry as we were in 1966 when he was first elected. I think he's very much out of touch with the Oregon economy."

"I think this is the finest quality of life in the United States that we have here in Oregon. And while I have great sympathy for timber workers who might be put out of their job because of the

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preservation of the ancient forest, I also feel we have to show compassion and help them find new jobs."

As an example of the possibilities that exist to reemploy displaced loggers, Lonsdale points to a wooden doors and window frame business in Bend. When it began years ago it was quite small and employed few. It has grown much and today it employs many of the mill workers displaced from their jobs because of automation. "We need things like that in other timber-dependent towns in Oregon," Lonsdale says.

"Old industries die, new industries are born. I think we have to retrain and we have to have people who are willing to be retrained. I'm not talking about training people for minimum-wage jobs as hamburger flippers, like all these loggers seem to be worried about becoming. I think there are well-paid jobs in the timber products industry besides logging. Right now there's a lot of denial going on out there," he says. "People are saying, 'We've been loggers all our lives. Our grandfathers were loggers.' Folks, let's face reality. The world changes all the time."

Lonsdale says he believes the workers must be willing to look at new jobs. "I just think they

can't dig their heels in and say, 'We'll never be retrained. All we know how to do is cut down trees.' I don't believe they are dumb. I believe these people are intelligent. They learned one job, why can't they learn another job?" he asks. "They have to go beyond the denial stage and say, 'It's going to change. Do we want to be out on the street or do we want to have a new job?' My feeling is that we all want them to have new jobs."

"I do think the feds have to supply money for retraining. We need low-interest-rate loans to create new businesses in timber-dependent towns. We do need some government help to help these businesses grow. We also have to stop log exports immediately. Not just from public lands but from private lands as well," Lonsdale insists. "We need to keep that raw material here and create new jobs out of that raw material."

According to Lonsdale, Hatfield is obligated to continue the tree harvesting because he has accepted large contributions from timber industry political action committees (PACs). "More than anything else, I'm just sick of the mess in Washington. People back there just don't seem to have any courage. They're owned by special interests, including our own Sen. Mark Hatfield, who I think takes a whole lot of money from special interests and is beholden to some of that money, maybe all of it," Lonsdale adds.

The businessman from Bend insists his campaign is not a personal vendetta against Hatfield though. "He's taken a lot of his money this time from timber industry PACs and he's become the chief spokesman for the timber industry back in the Senate, but it isn't just him and just this issue. It's the whole sort of lack of integrity, the whole sort of lack of courage back in Washington that has given us the \$3 trillion debt we have. We're the largest debtor nation in the world. It's given us the savings and loan scandal which is the largest financial disaster in the history of our country. I just think we need more integrity back in the Senate, frankly," Lonsdale says.

PAC contributions are the downfall of campaign financing according to Lonsdale. "I feel we need people back there who are indebted to no one but their own constituents. I'm working for the rest of us as opposed to the special interests," contends Lonsdale.

"Right now the only people that can run and win are people with name recognition or are rich or both," says Lonsdale who has contributed \$450,000 of his own money to his campaign. "But people who are extremely good or smart or capable or whatever, who are right on all the issues have no chance of winning unless they also have either name familiarity, money or both and that's just unfair. We have a very uneven playing field. I think we need a new way of electing people to office."

Lonsdale says his idea to level the field is to provide free television time to qualified candidates. "Then people who aren't rich but are qualified could actually have a chance of running and winning. We're spending an enormous amount of money right now for television." He said three quarters of his entire campaign expenses, or about one half million dollars, will be spent on television advertising. It's the need for a constant infusion of money to feed the advertising monster that make PAC contributions hard to turn down. "Most of those people raise money from sources that they then become indebted to."

"The airwaves basically belong to all citizens," Lonsdale points out. "I would say, 'Okay, stations, thou shalt provide X [number of] hours a year for qualified political candidates and you foot the bill.' What they do is they pass the cost of this free advertising on to their customers. That's what every legitimate business does. It would raise the cost of advertising a trivial amount, maybe 1 percent."

Lonsdale says most of the PAC money goes to the incumbents. He believes the current campaign finance system favors incumbents three ways: They have name familiarity that comes with being a member of Congress; they



PHOTO BY CHRIS FONES

have free mailing privileges; and they get enormous campaign contributions. "So they've got it their way three different ways," he says. "It's just a very unfair game."

If a chink can be found in Lonsdale's armor it's in the minority make-up of his own company, Bend Research, Inc., in Bend, Ore.

"It's mostly a WASP company, I must confess. I suppose our minority make-up is pretty much like the minority make-up in Bend. It's a lily-white town," he admits. "I think there's one black family in all of Bend out of 18,000 people. So our minority make-up may not be anything like the national average."

Women are nonexistent in management positions on the technical side of his business, but Lonsdale refuses to take full responsibility for that situation.

"Our company is a high-tech company. We've been searching for a long time for a very qualified senior woman scientist and we haven't found one," he says. Lonsdale says his company has been looking for five years for a woman with the right qualifications. "Right now the company is run by three white males. That's not because we're anti-black or anti-woman. Only something like 10 percent of the doctorates in science in this country are women. So it's a pretty slim field to pick from. The women we have in management positions run our personnel and our bookkeeping department but they don't run the technical side of our company." Lonsdale says he doesn't know of any gay men or lesbians working for him in Bend.

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His campaign staff is also lacking racial minorities, although women account for about half the staff. And his office administrator, Bruce Ansbury, is a gay man. Lonsdale said his connection with Right to Privacy PAC leaders, John Baker and Keeston Lowery, will help keep him in touch with the changing needs of the gay and lesbian community. "I've gone to their functions and they've come to mine so I feel pretty well connected with them."

Acknowledging that some candidates have used gay and lesbian support then turned their backs on the community and that he has no voting record to prove himself, Lonsdale said it's the basic integrity he has built his life on that will have to be his record.

"I don't plan to say one thing and do something else," he says. "I've built a life of integrity and I don't plan to walk away from that."



PHOTO BY BETH A. ALLEN

In the back room of his campaign office, Lonsdale watches a news report of an earlier interview.